

*CONFLICT OF
REASON & THEOLOGY.*

REYNOLDS

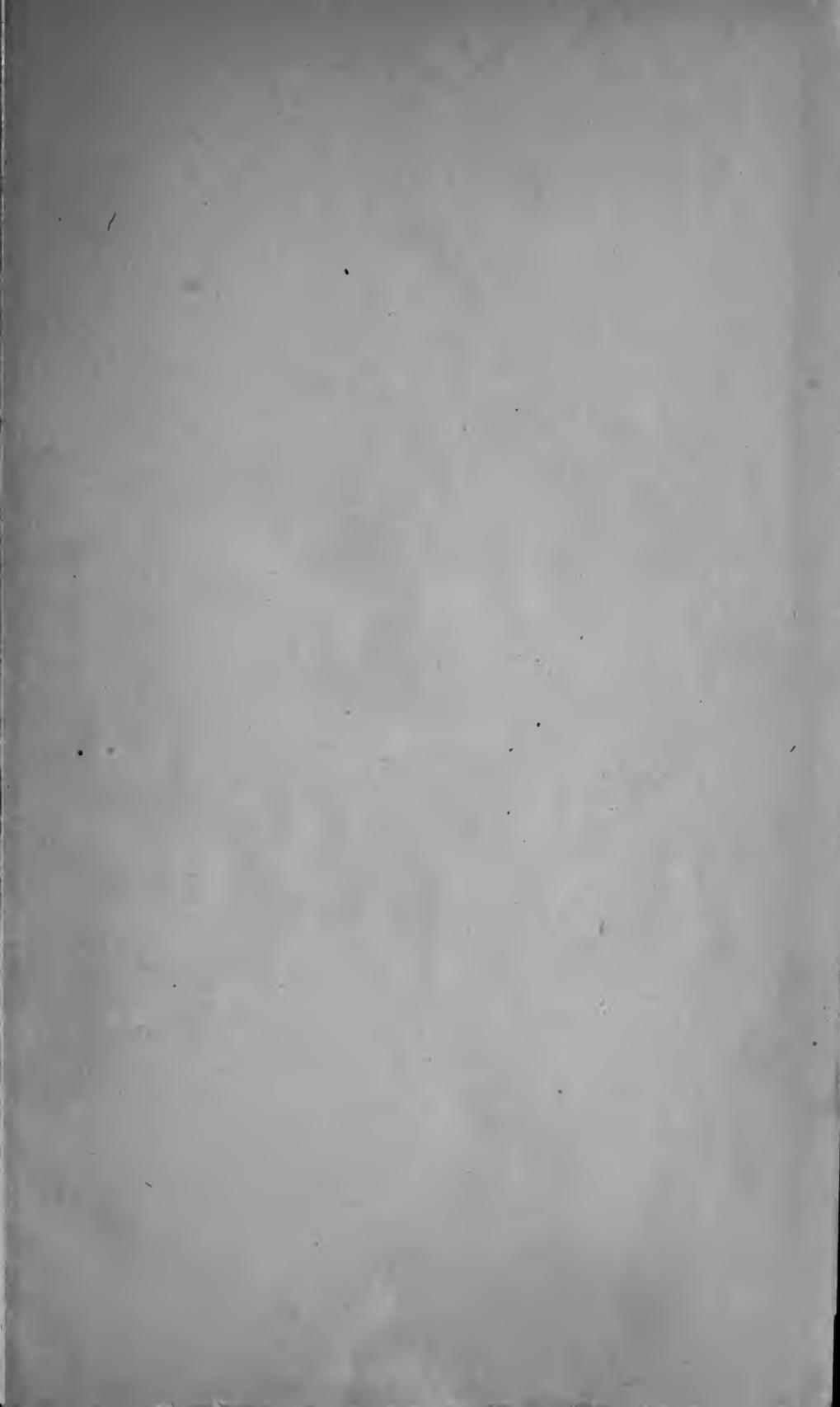
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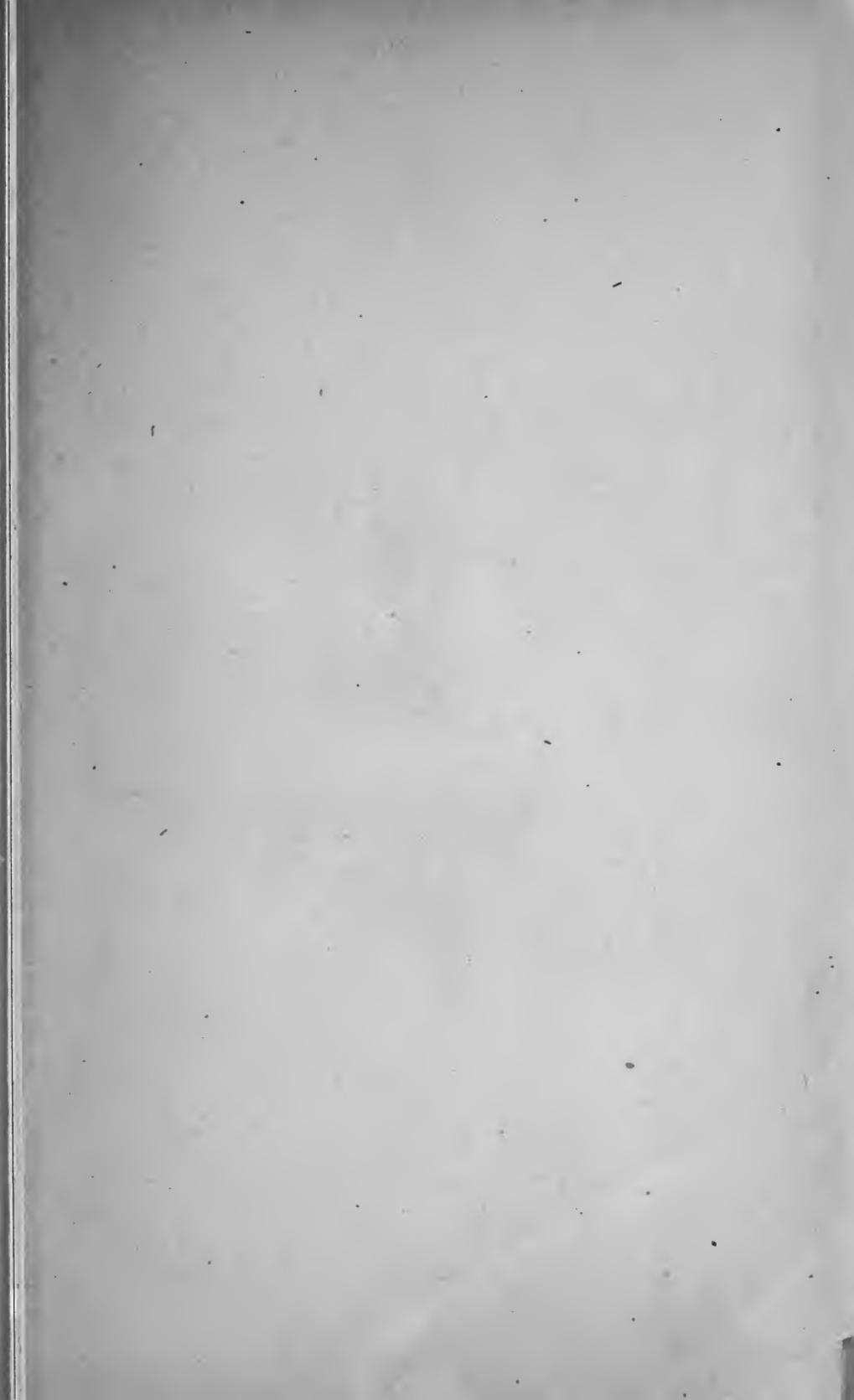
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CONFLICT
OF
REASON AND THEOLOGY

BY JESSE T. REYNOLDS.

Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord.—*Isaiah i. 18.*

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DEDICATION.

To those who wear the galling chain
Which dogma forges for the meek,
And him who bears the torturing pain
Which numbs the soul and racks the brain,
A few plain words I fain would speak.

I have no rev'rence for that past
Whose sheeted ghosts of doubt and fear,
Like gib'ring goblins, grim and ghast,
Athwart life's way forever cast
The shadow of some specter drear.

But I adore and cherish him,
Who, free from doubt or dark mistrust,
Without reserve or paltry whim,
In God, however clear or dim,
Beholds a Father, kind and just.

While he who prays, "Thy will be done,"
Then murmurs at decrees of fate,
Is doomed forevermore to run
The gauntlet of all doubt, like one
Whose faith proclaims a God of hate.

I pity those who always prowl
Where bats of fear forever flit,
Amid dark gloom where demons howl,
And creed's big-eyed lugubrious owl,
Forever hoots his sad "to whit."

Him most I love, who without fear
Hath earth's dim pathways nobly trod,
And yet attuned his list'ning ear
To nature's anthems loud and clear,
Whose harmonies proclaim *one* God.

To those grand souls who sought the lair
Where superstition's grinning gnome,
Once uttered howlings of despair,
Yet found no devil lurking there—
To such, I dedicate this tome.

PREFACE.

No theme can be so high or holy
As to forbid all honest thought—
Both by the great, or meek and lowly,
The right may be most freely sought.

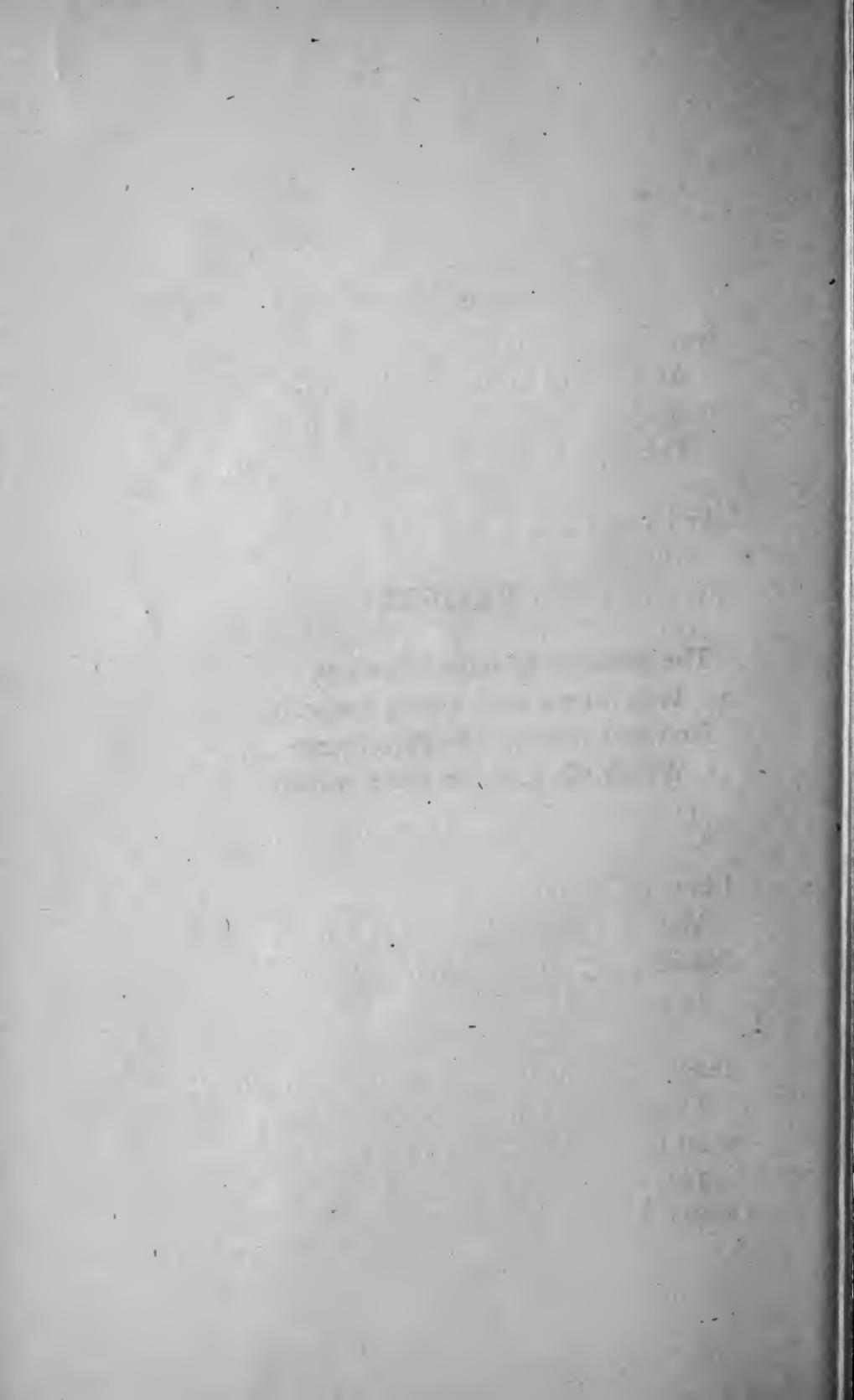
And at the throne of God-like reason
All should bend the suppliant knee ;
For to the truth naught can be treason,
Which disinthralls and sets mind free.

What are the triumphs won by terror,
Beside true manhood's priceless gem—
Men better far escape base error
Than wear wrong's gilded diadem.

I bow before One¹, God-eternal,
Who is all-wise, humane and just ;
But recognize no fiend infernal—
In God of love, I fully trust.

That unseen hand which brought us hither
Through that mysterious silent past,
Must lead us hence when life shall wither—
This power will guide us to the last.

¹ Notes in Addenda.



PROEM.

The proudest triumph of an age
Is to illume what wrong conceals ;
And that is glory's brightest page
Which the grandest truth reveals.

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CONFLICT OF REASON AND THEOLOGY.

PHILOSOPHY OF SALVATION.

If God be for us, who can be against us.—ROMANS viii. 31.

Amid grave questions most profound,
We often wonder, often dream
Of mysteries which cluster 'round,
And center in salvation's scheme.

Did a new form of "saving grace"
Once supersede an older one—
Was this designed to take the place
Of that which progress had outrun?

For generations, men of thought
Have vainly tried to understand
A scheme of love, with hate so fraught
That no good God could e'er have planned.

Then let us reason mind with mind—
Not as bigots, but like those
Who seek the pearl of truth to find,
With equal rights for friend or foes.

“ If God be for us ”² can we fail,
Though we ’gainst powers of hell contend,
Or legioned hosts of sin assail—
Must not God triumph in the end ?

If we believe some will be “ slain,”
Can we in perfect faith now pray
That all shall full salvation gain—
Shall faith pray yes, believing nay ?

Did man so far degenerate
From perfect type which God conceived,
That Christ must counteract sin’s fate,
O’er which Jehovah’s heart has “ grieved ? ”³

God can do some things, sole and lone,
Like making worlds on Moses’ plan,
But must His guiltless Son “ atone ”
For sin, ere He can pardon man ?

But why say God cannot fulfill
His own supreme, Godlike desires
(And save man by Almighty will),
Unless His only Son expires ?

This magnifies Christ over God,
And makes the “ Son ” in torture die,
To rescue man who blindly trod
The path assigned by the Most-high.

Can Christ-God do what God cannot ?

If not, why have more names than one,
Unless to say, God re-begot
Himself, so He could have a Son ?

Supreme Intelligence decrees

All acts which Godhood has performed ;
Can man so far thwart one of these
That aught must fail, if not reformed ?

Is God, man's friend, true and steadfast,
While Satan is our deadly foe—
Will God, or demon, damn at last,
The soul which writhes in endless woe ?

If Satan damns, could God prevent,
By interposing His high will ?
If not, which is omnipotent,
The law of love, or hate, to fill ?

Was Hell assigned existing space
In God's plan of the Universe ?
If not, where was its resting place
Before sin came and wrought its curse ?

Right strange, if God should tolerate
Within His universe of love,
A kingdom which is ruled by hate,
Defying Him who reigns above.

Is Satan God's antagonist,
Who roams the world to thwart His schemes ?
Except through God, none can exist,
Unless, perchance, in idle dreams.

More strange, if wrong doth still maintain
The subtle power in Eden shown ;
It cannot be Christ died in vain—
Then why not Hell's dark king dethrone ?

Naught is impossible with Him,
Who with all-wisdom cannot err ;
And though to us God's plans are dim,
His goodness can no wrong confer,

How can the wise, Omnipotent,
Fail of supreme, final success,
If His unfailing will is bent
Toward all wrong's complete redress ?

If God hath power,⁴ and the will
To circumvent each evil thought,
Why doth He not that wish fulfill,
And bring all wickedness to naught ?

How vain it were to catechise,
Or seek the reasons, aims, or ends,
Of the Eternal and All-wise,
Whose ways alone He comprehends.

Since sin existed from the hour
When earliest time on earth began,
It has defied creative power,
Or, hath a place in God's first plan.

As God made all, and can't do wrong,
There is no wrong, there is no right,
There is no weak, there is no strong,
In sight of Him who made all sight.

The earthquake shock, which topples down
The hut or palace in its path,
Though it may wear an angry frown,
Does not portend Jehovah's wrath.

God's whirlwind, which may seem to seek
For victims, in its awful rage,
Will kiss a sleeping infant's cheek,
Or fan the pallid brow of age.

The savage beasts, which roam the wood,
And reptile tribes, which curse the land,
Were blest of Him who called "all good"—
He fashioned each, with loving hand.

The angry sea, whose cruel wave
Hath no compassion in its breast,
Is but God's servant or His slave,
And simply does His high behest.

All things were made for human good,
But how to utilize them here,
Is not as yet quite understood—
God fails to make that secret clear.

Was Christ's grand mission *first* decreed,
After sin entered Eden's bower,
Or did God earlier see the need,
To counteract its fatal power ?

Was Christ's necessity foreknown ?
If not, when did His need appear ?
His coming light should have foreshone
Throughout eternity's wide sphere.

If we accept the lessons taught
Or shadowed in salvation's plan, .
Then, Christ was but an after-thought,
As sacrifice for fallen man ;

In God's first scheme He finds no place,
But now comes as a Codicil,
To modify first plans of grace,
And supplement Jehovah's will.

This scheme first dawned on human sight
Through fable's magic-mirror'd rays,
Whose faintly flick'ring, dim twilight
On man's imagination plays.

Old Pluto plays a funny freak,⁵
When tempting Christ he carries Him
From pinnacle to mountain peak—
Strange, God should humor such a whim.

Yet still more strange, beyond belief,
That Christ should then so weakly fail
To capture Hell's satanic chief—
But that would spoil this mythic tale.

God's "grief"⁸ and "anger,"⁶ "mixed with hate,"⁷
Beset man 'long his earthly path,
While demons, far more fortunate,
Escape destruction's vengeful wrath.

Male and female, God made all things
Which breathe or grow upon the earth ;
Was he, too, of the sable wings
Made double gender at his birth ?

Did "God *repent*,"⁸ in angry grief,
His crowning act in making man ?
Such nonsense stultifies belief,
And should have vanished with god Pan.

Through eighteen sleepless centuries,
These creeds have marched in sullen gloom,
Defying reason's stern decrees,
Which, soon or late, must seal their doom.

Why have not these phantasms fled
Along with fable's grinning gnomes,
Since, to all reason, they are dead
As mummies in the catacombs?

Enlightened men can not believe
These tales which frightened them in youth,
And naught as fact will they receive,
'Till founded on the rock of truth.

Were these strange fables told to-day
As something novel, men would hail
Them as devoid of reason's ray,
Or as some weird, Utopian tale.

Among absurd, archaic schemes,
Although this may not stand as chief,
It lacks, like fancy's idle dreams,
That sense whose force compels belief.

FREE (?) MORAL AGENCY (?).

Creative wisdom sends to earth
The human soul, earth's greatest pride,
Endowing each one at its birth
With reason, as its only guide.

Did God design that man should be
Left free to choose his darkened way—
Endowed with will's free (?) agency (?),
Was he to follow reason's ray ?

God knew full well how will would act,
When left to reason's fitful chance,
For this free agent (?) (bound in fact)
Hath full instructions in advance.

Men say they can, they would, or could,
Still, it's a fact (think as they may),
“Free-will,” when rightly understood,
Is but “necessity in play.”

The will is quite as much the thrall
Of things beyond its own control,
As is our own terrestrial ball,
Which forms a part of nature's whole.

Nor you, nor I, can make a thought—
Each is evolved from throbbing brain ;
And like the soul, it comes unsought,
As falls from heav'n the dew or rain.

Mankind, so helpless, weak, and blind,
Must on kind Providence rely,
For sight and touch, taste, smell, and mind
Are guiding lights sent from on high.

When all these lamps which brightly gleam
Have been extinguished, one by one,
Naught can relume their darkened beam,
Save He who lights the blazing sun.

Our lives run ever in the grooves
Where circumstances pave our way ;
Obedient to fixed law, mind moves,
From this it may not go astray.

Each man is held a cringing slave
To some great passion, vice, or grief,
Until his faithful friend, the grave,
Shall in its kindness give relief.

Search earth, or heaven, or viewless air,
There's no effect without its cause ;
Without dissent, all things declare
That naught is *free* from fate-fixed laws.

Man in one sense is a machine,
Which runs, not by a self-willed force,
But must depend on an unseen,
Creative power, which shapes his course.

The will, when rightly understood,
Is like a scale in equipoise ;
A trivial thing, of bad or good,
The equilibrium destroys.

Will is but the executive,
Which acts upon the reason's choice ;
But mind is the legislative,
Proclaiming edicts with stern voice.

While will sits like a judge supreme,
Who makes not, but interprets laws,
It oft affirms wrong's doubtful scheme
When right should gain its righteous cause.

Or juror-like, sworn to decide
Upon an action or offense,
Will, wrong or right, always abide
By law and the sworn evidence.

GOD'S FOREKNOWLEDGE.

"Whatever is is right," if true,
Would justify each wrangling schism
Which comes through that chameleon view,
Of fatalistic optimism.

If God permits a wrongful deed
O'er which He holds supreme command,
Why is it not as much decreed,
As though He did it with His hand ?

All-wisdom, to God's eye, doth lend
A forethought of what shall arise ;
While seeing far beyond time's end,
With Him there can be no surprise.

God's foreknown facts⁸ can never fail,
They're changeless as the laws of light ;
No matter what woes they entail—
Who shall run counter to His sight ?

If He now sees what each shall do,
No matter how much will we use,
There is but one path to pursue,
A different way no will can choose.

Because all-wisdom must foresee,
Will that forestall each coming act,
And make it God's supreme decree ?
Does His foreknowledge make the fact ?

No matter whether yea or no,
That neither makes the truth, nor mars ;
An act which God knows will be so,
Is fixed and changeless as the stars.

In His grand record, things to come
Are written down as each shall chance ;
His doomsday-book contains the sum
Of all the future in advance.

Did God make man and then make evil,
And bidding man to do but good,
Command him to resist the Devil,
Believing that he could or would ?

To thus affirm, or thus believe,
Would make Him vacillate and change ;
And such a God, I can't conceive,
With attributes so weak and strange.

If things to-day are different
From what He wished that they should be,
When He first formed His great intent,
Ere fate had issued its decree,

Then by mistake, however slight,
The plan arranged long in advance,
Being thus wrong by oversight,
All things to be, were left to chance.

But wherein is the end attained
Now dif'rent from the plan designed ?
When the divergence is explained,
Wisdom a remedy will find.

Though forced to wage th' battle of life,
We must by its results abide ;
But oft amid the fiercest strife
Fate seems to favor Satan's side.

MAN'S FALL.

When Adam came from Godhood's hand,
According to divine decree,
He then received the sole command—
Eat not from Knowledge's⁹ fated tree.

Although man took, and freely ate
That fruit which told him bad from good,
While disregarding God's mandate,
He did what fate decreed he should.

If gaining wisdom¹⁰ brings a curse,
Then, seeking knowledge is a crime ;
But this would reason's laws reverse,
And render ignorance sublime.

"Now, lest man should put forth his hand,"¹¹
And grasp immortal fruit "and live,"¹²
God turns him out to till the land,
Withholding what He would not give.

While God gave man the power to choose,
And take of knowledge to his fill,
Immortal fruit He did refuse,
In spite of man's boasted free-will.

With free access, the legends tell,
To that which was forbidden him,
"The tree of life" God guarded well
By "flaming sword" and "cherubim."¹³

Thus it appears man's will is "free"
When it accords with Godhood's mind,
But should the two wills disagree,
Man's act must be what *He* designed.

If God knew "serpents" *could* "deceive,"
And sought avoidance of sin's strife,
Why not protect our mother Eve,
As well as *guard* the "tree of life?"

Soon shall this allegoric tale,
Which witch and wizard-like held sway,
Assume its place behind the veil
Of fading things which pass away.

WHENCE CAME THE ANGELS?

Whence came those cherubims, who stood
As sentinels to guard the "tree
Of life," whose fruit, when taken, would
Confer an immortality? ¹²

Were they the ransomed dead, whose souls
Had run life's devious, fitful race
In some far older world, which rolls
Through outer fields of endless space?

Where is the realm from whence they came?
Is it a star whose light we see?
Hath it an orbit and a name,
Or has it long since ceased to be?

Are angels, spirit-lives, whose birth
Dates back to time's departed days,
When they were denizens of earth,
And like us trod life's rugged ways?

We query much if they look down
On earthly lives of sin and shame.
How gained they an immortal crown?
We wonder whence their *Saviour* came.

Do men see angels here no more,
Because their eyes are dim with grief?
If heav'n would send one to time's shore
How it would quicken our belief.

When superstition's cunning tale
Had ceased to fashion Faun and Fay,
Then gods and ghosts left hill and vale,
That reason might assert her sway.

RIGHT, VERSUS WRONG.

In time's first "mill" of right with wrong,
Old Satan was not even "scratched;"
It was the weak against the strong,
And man was sadly "over-matched."

Since Satan triumphed in his might,
What growing prestige he has felt;
Never a "draw," he wins each fight,
And proudly wears the "champion's belt."

Beholding this th' angels wondered,
And said, "if not a faulty plan,
Then man's trainer must have blundered,
If he could never whip his man."

If God desired right to gain
A triumph over every wrong,
Then to reason it is plain,
Vice should be weak, and virtue strong.

None disregard effect and cause,
Who rightly organize success;
And he who overlooks truth's laws,
Will strive in vain for wrong's redress.

If God would stand impartially,
A witness to man's fight for heaven,
Full well I know all will agree,
He should have made the forces even.

If sin has grown, through God's neglect
To interfere, throughout the past,
Why hath that not the like effect,
As if He wills that it should last ?

Doth lapse of ages sanctify
Those evils which the years prolong ?
Will mere existence justify
The changeless course of giant wrong ?

Can length of time baptize as right
An evil, though colossal grown ?
If right must stand or fall by might,
Is wrong then right till overthrown ?

Because a hoary wrong hath stood
An age athwart right's holy path,
Does this alone prove it is good,
Or multiply right's cause for wrath ?

Ere solving questions wide and deep,
We first must rise to God's high plane
And grasp truth with omniscient sweep,
To which frail man can ne'er attain.

HUMAN BLINDNESS.

Can blind and limping man deny
That potent power on which we lean,
And on whose aid we must rely,
Although it walks by us unseen ?

If yes, then how, and when, and where
Have you held life except on trust ?
Ah, weak and impious fool, beware,
Lest God turn your poor heart to dust.

Some insects live, mature, and die
Of ripe old age, within an hour.
Perhaps they too, think they defy
The great first cause, the central power.

Their little lives compared to ours
Are drops of water to the sea ;
While human weakness to God's powers,
Are moments to eternity.

Our ignorance of what is God,
Is blindness as compared to sight ;
While He is all, we're but a clod,
A creeping snail, to comet's flight.

Our lineage and ancient lore
Are lost in that receding past,
Whose echoless and silent shore
Gives back no answer, first or last.

Since all existence God doth give,
His sanction makes all things divine ;
Hence all that is, hath right to live,
If not, who'll draw dividing line ?

But have we rightly understood
The origin whence evil germs ?
Is it a fact that bad and good
Are relative, and not fixed terms ?

The pestilence is not a wrong,
Though it may fill unnumbered graves ;
And ocean tides will march along,
If millions sink beneath its waves.

Still, if we judge by that success
Which doth attend all sin and crime,
May we conclude God's watchfulness
Will guard them through all coming time ?

As wrong has met success from birth,
Thence it seems that God has given
Evil⁸⁹ the right to live on earth,
Subject to laws decreed in heaven.

In this queer world's mysterious ways,
Though right may fail, and suff'ring bleed,
Still that alone hath highest praise,
Which, wrong or right, doth best succeed.

Weakness, ground down by tyrant heel,
For aye hath waged unequal fight ;
Must it at last helplessly kneel,
Acknowledging that might makes right ?

Without man's knowledge or consent,
God forced us into life at birth,
But on what mission we were sent
Unto this strange mysterious earth,

Is wholly hidden from our sight ;
While with our reason's feeble ray,
We grope about in ignorance's night,
And never see beyond to-day.

Behind us lies the buried past,
Before us run eternal years ;
None comprehend His plans most vast,
Misunderstood is all He rears.

A few great men strut on life's stage,
And gaping fools applauding cry ;
Wisdom is grand in this wise age,
And naught is hid beneath the sky.

And some mole-sighted dupes believe
That science is great nature's key,
With which they stupidly conceive
Men may unlock God's mystery.

We know we live, but how, or why,
None knows but He who made all law ;
Though reas'ning as to why men die,
We can no wise conclusion draw.

Shall we now judge what God has made,
And criticise what He has planned,
When with the help of reason's aid
We could not make a grain of sand ?

God's ways so far our thoughts evade,
And over-reach all human ken,
That e'en the least thing He has made,
Defies the puny power of men.

While reck'ning life by paltry days,
Men mock all joy by silly fears ;
We could not learn God's hidden ways,
Were each short breath a million years.

PRETENDED REVELATION.

Some claim that God, with tongue of fire
And lips of flame, proclaimed to man,
By word of mouth, His great desire,
And shadowed forth creation's plan..

Through revelation's light, some hailed
The word of God to man revealed,
And saw with joy those truths unveiled,
Which He through ages had concealed.

Mahomet brings not God to earth;
But says, God took him up to heaven,
And gave him that prophetic birth,
For which through prayer, he long had striven.

He went to God, the grand first cause,
And from that august central source,
Received direct, Jehovah's laws,
Which are to guide our earthly course.

Joe Smith, in this enlightened age,
Pretends, in dreams an angel told
Where *he* might find God's written page,
On hidden plates of shining gold.

Thus through wild fancy's flick'ring gleams
He conjured up a tale absurd,
Whose creed, though baseless as his dreams,
Has gained belief, as Heaven's word.

And like all prophets who appear,
Imperiously he, like them, saith,
That as he had no witness near,
You must believe the whole by faith.

Each says, man blindly must believe,
(They all assume the selfsame view), .
That as God's prophets (?) can't deceive,
Therefore (of course) it must be true.

The prophets practiced every vice
Throughout all those pre-christian times,
While off'ring daily sacrifice,
They, in God's name, did damning crimes.¹⁴

From Moses, down to Brigham Young,
In name of God, they all maintain
Those creeds to which priestcraft has clung,
"By ways" most "dark," and "tricks most vain."

For God's good credit, we dispute
Their right to blaspheme His great name—
Some deeds¹⁵ which they to Him impute
Would make a Devil blush for shame.

Guided (they say) by Godhood's voice,
(With ev'ry thought and act a sin),
They don hate's livery from choice,
To basely serve the Devil in.

REAL REVELATION.

Through age on ages of the flight
 Of silent years, solemnly grand,
God's laws have wrought in lines of light
 His only will, with tireless hand.

Those plans, which wisdom has concealed
 Beyond most piercing finite ken,
Have never been by Him revealed,
 Nor written down with human pen.

God's records, in His compt of time,
 Sweep in such cycles grand and vast,
That, like eternity sublime,
 They seem to compass all the past.

He writes His everlasting will
 In nature's tablets, which He rears
In sea and rock, mount, vale, and hill ;
 These shall endure through all the years.

He has no language save in deeds,
 His voice by man hath ne'er been heard,
But in the universe, man reads
 His grand, authentic, God-writ word.

Eternity is His great book,
 Which men oft try to read, in vain ;
Yet cataract and murmuring brook
 Speak nature's language, clear and plain.

Through all His ways and works, He speaks
In myriad voices unto men ;
Still, lynx-eyed science often seeks
For mysteries beyond its ken.

What millions ask, but one attains ;
And centuries of men may grieve,
That, wishing what it never gains,
A mute one, seeking, may receive.

While all may knock at nature's gate,
She raises not her shrouding pall,
And patiently the world must wait
For one to lift the veil for all.

Though many-tongued, God speaks His word
In *nature's* ever varied strain,
A single ear at last has heard
What He hath spoken oft, in vain.

While Sphinx-lip'd *Æ*ons may have sung
The anthems which the ages chime,
Who first interprets nature's tongue,
Is the *true* prophet of his time.

With God, a century of space
May be required to grave one line,
Which men in after years may trace,
And thus spell out a grand design.

Those who through sacred records look,
 Hoping to find the light they seek,
 Must not forget that by this book,
 All things were made in one poor week.¹⁶

The prophet shows how God began,
 And how, world-building, He progressed,
 Working by days¹⁷ work like a man,
 And human-like taking a rest.¹⁸

Accepting Moses' mythoplasm
 As an inspired cosmogony.
 We cross creation's yawning chasm
 On fable-bridged theogony.

By revelation's light this world,
 With all the bright, celestial spheres,
 Were into being grandly hurled
 Within the last six thousand years.

While every line on nature's page,
 As read by geologic light,
 Reveals a lapse of age on age
 Beyond the boldest fancy's flight.

The faintest light or silvery ray
 From starry outpost of known spheres
 Would, if such star was made to-day,
 Not reach us in a million years.

Or if such star had ceased to live
More years ago than earth has days,
Its light would now its radiance give,
And still pour down its brilliant rays.

But scheming monks, in stupid greed,
Made time on earth reach but a span,
That they might force on men their creed,
Pretending that they knew God's plan.

This *written* word, by church-craft taught
As book of God, by inspired pen,
So dwarfs Him in both deed and thought
He sinks below respect of men.

When avalanche or earthquake shock
Leave desolation in their course,
Rending the earth as if to mock
Man's puny power by nature's force,

Or when the comet's fiery trail
Writes God's grand words across the sky
In blazing characters, we hail
This power as God, who rules on high.

From crag to crag and peak to peak
We see the zig-zag light'ning fly,
And when the mut'ring thunders speak
The cloud-cap'd mounts echo reply.

Thus those who bow at nature's shrine
Must day by day forever learn
That He alone, being divine,
Man should all base pretenders spurn.

While all the mystic, God-writ lore,
In earth below and sky above,
Leads man forever to adore
The *one* true God, whom all should love.

But Bible, dogma, church, and creed,
Which teach God's falibility,¹⁹
Have sown, unwittingly, the seed
Of rankest infidelity.

By nature's grand astrology,
Whose steady brilliance never pales,
We read God's own chronology,
Which puts to shame all earth-born tales.

God takes a million years to write
One leaf in His great book of earth,
While in life's span prophets indite
Earth's history and man's strange birth.

All self-made prophets have conspired
To dupe men by fraud and deceit,
Till he, who says he is *inspired*,
Deserves the well-earned name of cheat.

All God intends mankind to know
Is graven on the earth or sky;
What He conceals we must forego
As secrets only known on high.

CANT AND COMMON SENSE.

When Moses sought to perpetrate
Some wicked action, vile and base,
He always plead decree of fate,
Received from Godhood "face to face."²⁰

"Lord said to Moses,"²¹ do thou so,
Made God the scapegoat of more crime,
Of murder,²² rape,²³ pillage, and woe,
Than would damn both to end of time.

In those dark days, each bloody scheme,
With every damnable abuse,
Was justified by some vague "dream,"²⁴
A most infallible excuse.

The people, "murmuring," would rebel,
Then Moses, seeking nearest hill,²⁵
Always found God, and (strange to tell)
His voice confirmed the prophet's will.

To aid this greatest butcher²² known
(If we take his munchausen tale),
God daily left His heavenly throne
To meet him in earth's mount or vale.

The *common* herd seek God in vain,
And (though the thing may seem absurd)
They find Him not throughout earth's plane—
Great *leaders only* (?) hear His word.

Those base blasphemies were believed
By each slave-blinded,²⁶ ignorant clod,
And what he said, they all received
As undisputed word of God.

But men of sense, who now pretend
That God came at his slightest word,
Will any flagrant lie defend,
No matter how strangely absurd.

Mankind love humbug as of yore,
And "from the cradle to the grave"
They blindly worship and adore
The hand whose galling chains enslave.

The reigning prince of regal line,
In royalty's limping defence,
Claims kingship by a "right divine,"
And holds it through this false pretence.

Vague hero-worship holds its place,
And while it leads the world along
It ever sways a thoughtless race,
And fortifies the power of wrong.

The free-born soul should seek relief
From creeds, which make men arrant knaves,
For those who strangle their belief
Are dogmas' most degraded slaves.

When will the "tree of knowledge" bear
Full fruit of truth's millennial years ?
Oh, for that time when none shall dare
Profane the temple reason rears !

The Pope's infallibility
Is by his church enforced so well,
That they believe he holds the key
To ope the gates of heaven or hell.

What Papists claim for holy see,
The orthodox, each one, pretend
That they can do as well as he,
By faith and prayer, reach the same end.

But neither church can e'er progress
While thus bound down by slavish creed,
Which must retard all true success,
Till they from bigotry are freed.

Were it not for divine free thought,
Which has grand missions to perform,
Truth's army never would have fought
The battles of the world's reform.

While churches shun truths they should court,
They are assailed by doubt-lit light ;
And while they sing, "we'll hold the fort,"
Reason will put their creeds to flight.

The church may excommunicate,
And call men deists, if they please,
Still, hand in hand, the wisely great
Will follow reason's grand decrees.

Truth's progress now so far outruns
The non-progressive forms and creeds,
That bright-eyed science church-craft shuns,
Seeking the soul's more urgent needs.

The independent, thinking mind
Fears not the hells false creeds have dug,
And, seeking not their heaven to find,
Scorns those delusions which they hug.

Free-thinkers, as a rule, are just,
And though they neither rant nor rave,
In truth, they place so firm a trust,
That it must shame fear's abject slave.

Both Thomas Paine, and Ingersoll,
Who spurn all slavery of thought,
Meet hate from creed's avenging Saul,
Since they deny what wrong hath taught.

And all must share their envious fate,
However free from error's stain,
Who, disbelieving laws of hate,
Say, "Christ was most unjustly slain."

Those whom the church thus falsely brand
As infidel, in its fierce rage,
Have oft been crowned by nature's hand,
Imperial leaders of their age.

While creeds pretend to grant a boon,
They pinch salvation's blood-bought dole,
Until doubt-spun cobwebs festoon
The love-lit chambers of the soul.

Truth-loving freedom must rebel
Against each fear-built house of prayer,
And scorning hate's dark, dismal cell,
It seeks for reason's freer air.

In wide domain of peerless thought,
Nature and reason doth create
A fane for those who long have fought
'Gainst cloven-footed fiend of hate.

Insulting God with fulsome praise,
Cant, fawning, bends low in the dust,
And seeks to change His righteous ways
By asking what is most unjust.

Truth worships God by noble deeds,
While with lip service and long prayers,
Fear prays to Him, through forms and creeds,
To save it from satanic snares.

One loves a God who rules His own,
And guards them with parental care ;
The other fears a fiend, whose throne
Stands midway 'twixt joy and despair.

When church-mythologists first found,
In their dark creed, hell's yawning pit,
They seemed to feel in "honor bound"
To find some means to people it.

They set the fork-tailed fiend at work,
And promised him, as worthy hire,
The Pagan, Deist, Jew, and Turk,
To catch the souls and tend the fire.

Thus far this scheme works wondrous well,
'Til those broad-browed free-thinkers ask,
"Who made this club-foot imp of hell,
Which loves in sulphur flames to bask ?"

Creeds scan their fable books in vain—
No Maker e'er rewards their search;
Therefore the inference is plain,
He must be fathered by “the church.”

PROPHETS AND MIRACLES.

How man's blind faith has cursed the race—
Its deeds of horror we abhor ;
Its bloody footsteps we may trace
By rack and stake and cruel war.

All miracles are wisely planned,
Ever assuming in advance,
That what men cannot understand
Cometh from God, beyond all chance.

Prophets put forth their word as chief,
Which stupidly men used to take
Without one thought of unbelief,
Or least suspicion of mistake.

Each says he is God's vicegerent,
Thus leaving you but one reply,
(If modestly irreverent)—
You simply say, you think they lie.

This prophet says he's in the right,
While that one points the "royal way";
Another claims that conscience's light
Alone illumines with heavenly ray.

CONSCIENCE.

Still, conscience is but a result,
And never is or was a cause;
In infancy it lies occult,
And springs from education's laws.

It is a blind, uncertain guide,
With error, oft so vaguely fraught,
That he, who by its lights abide,
Must simply do as he is taught.

If conscience, formed by Jewish law,
Led Paul on persecution's ways,
A later conscience taught him awe,
And all his hate was turned to praise.

And since it changes its decree,
It is at best the ripening fruit
Of learning's most prolific tree;
Product of earth beyond dispute.

When men have taught, early and late,
According to a narrow view,
They sure as fate anticipate
A Christian, Pagan, Turk, or Jew.

Man has from God no guiding ray
By which to steer on life's dark stream;
What we obey oft leads astray,
When led by conscience's faulty gleam.

A GRAND COMEDY. WHY WAS SATAN TURNED LOOSE?

Weird tragi-comedy in fact,
With shifting scenes from age to age—
God, Man, and Devil, each to act
A leading part on life's grand stage.

With hell and Beelzebub not made,
When earth first sung creation's song,
All creeds must lose their "stock in trade,"
And seek some other giant wrong.

Grim devilship and godly hate
Were first by priestcraft shrewdly planned,
For they salvation's need create,
Then profit by its great demand.

If God had kept old Satan bound
Upon his hate-built, sulph'rous throne,
Then, seeking light, man had not found
That wisdom whence all wrong has grown.

Salvation's scheme could not succeed,
Unless the evil one goes free,
Therefore the church, in direst need,
Sought help from his grim majesty.

They say, man's dark antagonist
Is everywhere, but so concealed
That though they know he must exist,
None has his hiding place revealed.

But this artful, dodging devil,
Cerberian-headed, sly old dog,
Chief actor in the world's great revel,
Always preserves a strict *incog.*

'Tis easy said, "he's everywhere,"
(And once excited gravest fears),
But priests in packs have sought his lair
In vain, for near six thousand years.

These bold Nimrods of valiant fame,
Who, ever on the war-path roam,
Seek only for weak, human game—
They never bring a devil home.

And yet, *they say*, God leads the chase
In this grand devil-hunt, or war,
To snatch men from the foul embrace
Of faith's great myth, mischievous Thor.

If God is truly "everywhere,"
And fills all time and earthly space,
It rather seems, with prudent care,
He'd meet the *old one* face to face.

If God should catch him "some fine day"
(At work upon his hellward road),
Do you suppose that He would say,
"Now, Satan, seek your hot abode,

"And there remain to stir your fire—
Go keep your sulph'rous burning flame
As livid as your quenchless ire—
Please go to Hades, whence you came"?

If Satan should refuse to go,
Could God compel him if He would,
(In spite of an emphatic no!)
And would He do so if He could?

That Satan is a monstrous myth,
Creation of disordered brain,
Is the "true inwardness" and pith
Of truth, which reason must make plain.

HUMAN IGNORANCE.

We comprehend not bad, nor good,
Which mingles ever in our lives ;
But little can be understood,
However much man vainly strives.

What speeds the Comet in its flight,
While traversing its circling zone ?
'Tis that unseen, self-centered might,
Which sits on fate's eternal throne ;

Whose endless course science may trace
By myriad worlds where it hath trod,
Each star its footprint throughout space,
Until we reach what we call God.

We cringe and skulk in coward fear
In presence of this vast unknown,
Whom we are told is ever near,
And hears our every prayer and groan.

The rays which on our paths have shone,
But serve to prove that we are slaves
Of ignorance, with light alone
Which will suffice to find our graves.

Though man was made to fill some plan
Which heavenly foresight must forestall,
Still, ere his first-day race he ran,
He met with what is termed "his fall."

Ere man had eaten of the "fruit,"
He was so ignorant and rude,
That, like the meanest living brute,
He did not know that he was nude.²⁷

His only rules of ethic's light,
With sad experience, came along ;
He blindly groped in ignorance's night,
'Til he *learned* right by *doing* wrong.

If Adam "fell," on life's first day,
He gained thereby the knowledge lent,
To be his sole, safe, guiding ray,
Through life's untried experiment.

While floating on life's turbid stream,
Its noiseless, never-ceasing flow
Is lit by hope's auroral gleam—
But where 'twill end, no mortals know.

Or, soothed by life's sweet pulsing throb,
Our youthful joys each disappear ;
What "thief of time" may fail to rob,
Oft flies on Condor wings of fear.

O'er life's dark mystery we weep,
In which all peace is bought with strife ;
But who will count existence cheap,
Where death's the purchase price of life ?

Yet, let no silly babbler's tongue
Denounce that wise divinity,
Since God's grand force, whence all hath sprung,
Acts from divine necessity.

WAS THE "FALL" A GAIN OR LOSS?

Was Adam's fall a gain or loss—
In view of learning since achieved ?
Truth's gold so far outweighs wrong's dross,
He lost not half what he received.

One hour of free, untrammel'd thought,
Disenthralled from ignorant vice,
Was with far greater value fraught
Than years of Adam's Paradise.

Who falls from error's murky ray,
And finds the sunlight of all truth,
Escapes from man's senile decay
Into life's perennial youth.

Instead of "knowledge" bringing death,²⁸
It lights the real torch of life,
Whose flick'ring flame, fan'd by truth's breath,
Brings peace and joy instead of strife.

Could man alone by sinning die,
And but through Christ e'er be forgiv'n ?
Will double death bridge earth and sky—
Is this the only road to heaven ?

If the supreme, august Unknown
Had *sought* for right's millennial day,
All wrong *must* have to Hades flown,
And virtue would hold perfect sway.

But what were virtue without vice ?
An endless round of piety
Would rob mankind of that rare spice, -
Of infinite variety.

A world all smiles, without a tear,
Devoid of all disparity,
Must, when it bids farewell to fear,
Forego all Christian charity.

Without a deacon, church, or creed,
And not a sinner to forgive,
Humanity would feel the need
Of world less dull in which to live.

No vice to shun, no good to do—
In such a humdrum place to dwell,
We'd pray for brimstone, Satan too,
That we might start a *little* hell.

CAUSE AND EFFECT.

The crowning mystery of earth
Is solved by him who seeks and learns,
Why man to life first came through birth,
And why through death, to earth returns.

Was man confated to no end,
When he was fated first to be?
What does creatorship portend,
If God does not all ends foresee?

From the minutest grains of sand,
To those vast worlds of seething flame,
All things are guided by that hand
Which made and governs all, the same.

Does that grand, vivifying cause,
Which must illume each living soul,
Exempt man from eternal laws—
Does he alone defy control?

Naught does or can antagonize
The will of Him who is all-force;
Omnipotent, and too, all-wise,
God must direct creation's course.

Should He withdraw, for but an hour,
His all-sustaining, guiding laws,
All force would lose its vital power,
And in wide death all life must pause.

We cannot see, but through His sight,
No one can breathe, save by His breath;
When He withholds sustaining might,
We solve life's mystery in death.

Grand harmonies in earth and sky,
Prove that the wisdom which first planned,
Still guards with ever watchful eye,
And guides with an unerring hand.

These changeless laws point toward an end,
A grand result, or fate-fixed goal,
To which creation's all must tend,
"True as the needle to the pole."

The first cause fixes and defines
All things which follow, first or last;
Hence it results, that God designs
The ends, His prescience must forecast.

An all-wise Maker must be held
To comprehend and fully know,
Why He first made the world of eel,
And what results therefrom must flow.

Although His ways are most obscure,
They indicate a perfect thought,
Foreshadowing ends which must inure,
As if some grand effects were sought.

Since every cause must, without fail,
A fixed result forever draw,
Therefore all causes must entail
Effects, which flow from changeless law.

Had we all-wisdom, we might trace
The least effect back to its source,
Where we should meet Him face to face,
Who is the Author of all force.

Who starts a cause, makes its effect
Beyond all cavil, doubt, or chance ;
Therefore how idle to conject,
That fate foredooms not, in advance.

If the great cause of every cause
Made all, then sought rest in surcease,
Nothing was made or ruled by laws,
But by an infinite caprice.

The flying worlds, which nightly deck
The star-lit brow of sombre night,
Are each controlled and held in check
By nature's laws, which guide their flight.

The restless ocean-wave which rolls,
obeys the unseen hand which guides,
And most mysteriously controls
The ebb and flowing of the tides.

Since all is governed by that hand
Which holds each world in separate spheres,
Will it not guide, as God has planned,
Far in advance of all the years ?

Will the creating hand, which led
Us blindly through creation's door,
Abandon us when life has fled,
Or lead us on, forevermore ?

If there is life beyond the tomb,
There can be but one august power,
Which, unasked, guides us through the gloom,
Beyond earth-life's brief, fleeting hour.

If man was in "God's image" made,
And Christ was God in human guise,
The very God who doth pervade
Earth, heaven, and hell, and boundless skies,

This being who is everywhere,
Will surely let no fiend assail ;
But will so guard and guide with care,
That nothing planned shall ever fail.

Who plans, then builds a universe,
And will not crush the first attempt
To blight it with satanic curse,
Must merit man's supreme contempt.

Godhood at first His plans conceived,
Then so established changeless laws,
That each effect, to be achieved,
Should, in its turn, become a cause.

Cause and effect, through all, combined
To bring results as first ordained ;
Thus ev'ry end was pre-defined,
Ere first effect had been obtained.

Unless God fails, for want of force,
To execute His wise desires,
All things must follow nature's course,
Or, in confusion, all expires.

As God sent Christ to counteract
The wrongs of Satan, sin, or evil,
Then man, at least, can but exact
Some reason why God fears the Devil.

If Satan can lure *one* to hell
In spite of God's might to defend,
We wonder not that Adam fell—
Why not o'erthrow God in the end ?

If Satan ever tempted Eve,
Then he was there when earth began,
Having sole aim but to deceive,
He was a part of Godhood's plan.

Since God is God, this is not true ;
For it would make Him vile and base,
According to all reasoning view,
To thus fore-damn the human race.

This leaguing Godship with the scheme
On which all devilhood is reared,
Makes Him far worse than we can deem,
And none can love what they have feared.

On His omnific arm we lean,
And in His goodness place our trust ;
For though His ways are all unseen,
Creation's God is wise and just.

Unless *some* end was first designed,
God could not be our steadfast friend ;
The first cause hath all ends defined,
Therein will He all wrongs forefend.

Though worlds grow old and wan and gray
Upon "the wrinkling stalk of time,"
The great first cause speeds on its way,
Rejoicing in its youthful prime.

This earth may sometime cease to be
A home for present race of man,
But in time's dim eternity
The end will justify some plan.

At some small angle, more or less,
 We must approach an end designed ;
 For God must guide if He will bless,
 Else was there no creating mind.

PREDESTINATION.

But who so stupid as to say,
 That to Jehovah, the All-wise,
 Man's acts were not foreseen alway,
 Or that the "fall" was a surprise ?

A million years before our birth,
 In God's pre-knowledge, He foresaw
 Our whole career upon the earth,
 With great command and broken law.

He saw all future sin and crime,
 When on creation's morn He stood,
 Yet, looking through all coming time,
 He still pronounced that all was good.²⁹

Making both cause and its effect,
 And seeing what results must flow,
 If He was pleased, shall we suspect,
 Or guess, or say, " He did not know ? "

Shall puny man now arrogate
The right to judge Infinity,
And then presumptuously dictate
A better plan of fate's decree ?

Since God foresaw, ere time began,
The end of all which was to be,
Yet altered not His scheme or plan,
Was He then blind, since you don't see ?

But as He changes not His laws
To make results come different,
We must presume, effect and cause,
Both, suit His first all-wise intent.

Knowing the end He seeks to gain,
He sees no need to re-arrange
His purposes, to Him so plain ;
They'll neither need nor know a change.

We came to live upon the earth
Responsive to creative thought ;
And life, that pearl of greatest worth,
Was forced upon us all, unsought.

That power which gave this priceless prize,
Though guarding it through joy and pain,
Will sunder all our earth-born ties,
And take it to itself again.

When we have run our earthly course,
The same mysterious, phantom hand
Will draw us, with resistless force,
Toward that end which God has planned.

All nature runs a circling round,
And follows God-directed spheres ;
Comets, which range through depths profound,
Return with their appointed years.

Sleeping, we waken but to scheme
How we can cheat our friend, the grave,
And waking not from life's last dream,
The soul goes back to God who gave.³⁰

ORIGIN OF THE IDEA OF GOD'S WRATH, ETC.

In ancient, mythologic times,
Which stretch far back beyond the flood,
Mankind *atoned* for sin and crimes
By sacrifice and shedding blood.³¹

That heathen notion first took form
And grew from childish fear and dread,
Which saw God's anger in the storm,
And in the earthquake felt His tread.

They heard His threat'ning anger crash
In thunderbolts, which rent the sky ;
While in the lightning's blinding flash
They saw stern vengeance in His eye.

The whirlwind was His angry breath,
Which swept the earth but to destroy ;
Therefore, they reasoned, blood and death
Appease His wrath, and give Him joy.

'Tis not through sense, but craven fear,
That hell makes heaven a human need ;
Such cowardice costs far too dear
At price of Satan's priest-wrought creed.

Still men grew wicked from the hour
When Eve first heard the serpent's voice ;
Since when, they list to evil's power,
Seeming devoid of will's free choice.

God scourged two cities ⁸² in " His wrath,"
With fiery rain from heaven hurled ;
As men would follow not His path,
He drowned ⁸³ out the living world.

If man's transgressions were so great
That " God repented making man," ⁸
It ne'er could be with Him too late
To alter or revise His plan.

But has He changed, in any way,
The *causes* which produce all evil?
If not, wherein does He display
The least desire to thwart the Devil?

What was accomplished by the tide
Which surged above Mount Ararat,
If men to sin are still allied,
And give no heed to God's fiat?

Though He, with seething, angry waves,
Washed out the sins which "grieved His heart,"
Still, from the cataclysm He saves
The seed,⁸⁴ from which new sin will start.

Herein there is no better plan,
Than when with Adam and with Eve,
Creating whom, the race began—
Will He now find less cause to "grieve"?

And since the flood sent death to all
But Noah, Japheth, Ham, and Shem,⁸⁵
God must all sinful acts forestall,
If He would be quite rid of them.

Still, fire and flood are wholly vain
To check the growth of evil's power,
For soon men try on Shina's plain
To reach high heaven through Babel's tower.⁸⁶

By dreams and famine, fire and flood,
By plagues of locusts, frogs, and lice,
And turning rivers into blood,³⁷
He vainly sought to subdue vice.

If we take Revelation's word,
God had no well defined intent ;
Failing by means the most absurd,
He tried some new experiment.

In reas'ning thus, we simply say,
His wisdom is no guiding light ;
Groping in doubt from day to day,
He lacks a God's discerning sight.

Empiricism can form no part
In God's all-wise decrees of fate ;
None may His attributes dispart—
All power in Him we postulate.

He was the prime Author and source
Of mind and matter, He'll be th' last,
When life and death have spent their force—
Final and first, great protoplast.

But is this history exact,
Which says, repenting Godhood "grieved
That He made man." Was this the fact ?
If so, He must have been deceived

As to the grand results which flow
From causes which He authorized.
How vain to say, "God did not know,"
And therefore must have been surprised.

Such is false reasoning, and it shocks
All sense of truth. Still, it is plain,
Without this brain-spun paradox
Hell's sulph'rous fires were lit in vain.

Is this wild legend wholly true,
Or did God know all in advance ?
Reason approves the safer view,
That naught was jeopardized by chance.

ALL THINGS GOVERNED BY FIXED LAWS.

All things are governed by fixed laws,
Which are as changeless as their source ;
A greater power, attracting, draws
The weaker by superior force.

You drop a stone, it don't ascend,
It may not choose, but must obey ;
And true to nature will descend—
Its path is fixed, it cannot stray.

Nothing is independent, then,
Of Him who made and governs all ;
Naught can escape the piercing ken,
Which notes the tiny " sparrow's fall."

If God directs, His guiding hand
Leaves naught on earth to idle chance ;
And human will shapes its command,
By some external circumstance.

Naught is exempt from fate's control ;
For, laws of mind we clearly trace,
As well as those for worlds which roll
Through God's unfathomed depths of space.

In spite of man's vaunted free-will,
We often find God doth refuse
To grant the power some act to fill,
Because *He* otherwise doth choose.

When we would run a dif'rent course
From what Jehovah hath designed,
Omniscience can bring a force
To lead us in the path assigned.

His means are most august and grand,
When He has missions to perform ;
While thunders echo His command,
Whirlwinds obey, and wing the storm.

If we could show, that He can fail
 Of full success in any plan,
 Therein His Godhood we assail,
 With frailty's attributes of man.

God cannot err, nor fail, nor change ;⁸⁸
 He cannot from His purpose stray—
 Naught can be new to Him, or strange,
 No more than darkness can be day.

IS GOD HUMAN, OR DIVINE?

Creed gives God joy and grief and pain ;
 It makes Him happy, and then sad—
 Then sees Him fail, and try again,
 Saying He's sorry, and then glad.

We trace all things to one first source ;
 From that same fount whence virtues flow,
 There also springs dark evil's⁸⁹ force,
 Which desolates the world with woe.

Salvation's God in His right hand
 Brings man, in His own image cast,
 While in His left, with power as grand,
 He brings time's first iconoclast.

Such God, like mythologic Mars,
Is partly human, part divine ;
Although each lives beyond the stars,
Their wishes fail, like yours or mine.

Creed makes Him “harden hearts”⁴⁰ of those
'Gainst whom He seeks pretext to slay ;
If this were true, it would expose
God to contempt, now and alway.

When earnest men, through doubt or fear,
Rely upon such vain relief,
The flimsy fabrics which they rear
Serve to destroy all sane belief.

And does this changeless God of all
Make some the sport of a vile trick,
Whereby they, unsuspecting, fall ?
Such joking would disgrace “old Nick.”

Priestcraft must make God from time’s dawn,
With attributes⁴¹ less than supreme ;
Else is their “occupation gone,”
As His perfection spoils the scheme.

Now, this supreme, august Godhead
Is made to fill all time and space ;
Once, He as man hath dying bled,
As sole and only means of grace.

The great Arch-fiend is kindly nursed,
And he and God are ever nigh ;
Though Satan is most soundly cursed,
He always lives, though God did die.

Is the true God mere flesh and blood,
With human passions so distraught,
That He in "anger" (?) brings a flood
To whelm the sin, error has brought ?

Will He, who world on world creates,
Hopelessly mar, with fatal curse,
His "image," which He animates
To crown His God-built universe ?

When on creation's errand bent,
If He with falter'ring step once trod,
Or since hath found cause to "repent,"
Therein He fails to be a God.

For, none "repent" except for cause,
Which must exist in thought or act ;
He cannot think against His laws,
No more than 'gainst Himself react.

SALVATION.

Churchmen most arrogantly claim,
“Christ’s sacrifice will not atone,
Without belief that Jesus came
And died for fallen man alone !”

The first dissembling charlatan,
Who claimed that church-craft held the key
Which opes the heav’ly door to man,⁴²
Taught rankest, blackest blasphemy.

Each, self-appointed Priest and Pope,
Affirmed that Heaven’s narrow path,
Lay through the church, as only hope
To ’scape God’s sin-avenging wrath.

These had been “called (they said) to pray,
And daily keep their armor bright ;
While with blind faith all men must *pay*,
So *they* could wage the glorious fight.”

Thus, these toll-takers on God’s road,
Enforced the lie they told, so well,
That all who wished for heaven’s abode,
Said, “we must *give*, or go to hell !”

This path of grace, though built by love,
Has been macadamized with gold,
By those who sought the realms above,
Whose bliss “can ne’er be bought or sold.”

Since God, in love, *can* shape our fate,⁴⁸
By granting grace to every soul,
Is Satan not outdone in hate,
If hell is *one* soul's endless goal ?

If heathen sinners find relief,
Because they *blindly* go astray,
Such are not rescued by "belief,"
But in God's *voluntary* way.

If all are saved who *do* "believe,"
And those escape who *can't* see right,
Then, *all* salvation must receive—
Half saved by darkness, half by light.

If men are blest through Christian acts,
Salvation then, is not by grace ;
If saved by grace, then God exacts
No works as means to save the race.

No plan of "grace" can be of God,
If it in any portion fails ;
His plans fail not, who ne'er hath trod
Dark error's path, which sin entails.

To say God fails, in part, or whole,
Or decrees not all in advance,
Takes from His hand supreme control,
Which leaves salvation too, to chance.

If any can be wholly lost,
Then a countless host must fall,
And pay in Hell the fearful cost,
Which sin's existence brings to all.

Could Christ in faith, as loving Son,
Pray for a boon He might not gain,
If He well knew, while ages run,
Some souls should writhe in endless pain ?

Had Christ full faith that *all* should live,
If He, in love, sin's load would bear ?
Will God not a full pardon give,
In answer to Christ's dying prayer ?

If Christ, on heavenly mission bent,
Was bearer of God's gift of grace,
(Doing the will of Him who sent),
He died in vain, or saved the race.⁴⁴



PRAYER.

But what is prayer ? Why should we pray ?
Why ask of one, who, 'tis agreed,
Knoweth our wants, ere we can say,
“ This is our wish, or that our need ? ” ⁴⁵

No matter how we supplicate,
We cannot change His plan, or will ;
He destined each to some fixed fate,
And must His purposes fulfill.

If from the first He had in view
Some grand design, He cannot pause
And change His plan, for me or you ;
Nor can He contravene His laws.

That, God knows best, to me is plain ;
And as His motives must be good,
It seems to me unwise and vain,
To try to change them, if we could.

If He should answer every prayer
Which wise and simple choose to ask,
Confusion would be everywhere—
To rule would be a hopeless task.

Still, prayer hath uses, and doth bless
The one who kneels and humbly prays,
Though God heeds not his soul's distress,
Or turns deaf ear to all he says.

For he who asks in faith and trust,
With earnest wish for purer soul,
Hath done the act which makes him just,
And his belief "hath made him whole." ⁴⁶

And he, who pleads with contrite heart,
Resolving that he will amend,
Hath gained the answer, from the start,
Which he beseeches God to send.

But as earth's pathways are so dim,
And our experience is so slight,
We, better far, trust all to Him,
Than weakly try to "set things right."

Should God's grand systems daily pause,
To say their prayers, and "count their beads,"
Effects would answer, each their *cause*,
But serve no human whims or needs.

Those glist'ning orbs, which dark night twirls
Amid the ringlets of her hair,
May be, a string of moon-sized pearls,
In nature's rosary of prayer.

But, since Creation in her rounds,
Hath, in unvarying pathways, trod,
Throughout her utmost, endless bounds,
This fact proclaims a changeless God.

The dying Christ, on Calv'ry's hill,
As Holy Spirit, God, or Son,
Sought not to change the Heavenly will,
But wisely prayed, "Thy will be done." #

That, God *can* change, for any cause,
Confounds all wisdom, and seems strange;
Such attributes must bid us pause—
They are beyond wide reason's range.

We pray to that unchanging One,³⁸
And ask for blessings in the name
Of Him, whose changeless course doth run,
“To-day, and yesterday, the same.”

We supplicate the “saving grace”
Of One, whose being antedates
The birth of time, and fills all space,
With myriad worlds, which He creates.

To change His will were hopeless task,
Since we know not, what to request;
No matter with what faith we ask,
He'll do *His* will, since *that* is best.

FAITH AND CREEDS.

Faith is the fountain, whence doth flow
The tenets crude, which are believed
By various sects. Still, who shall know
Which one hath truth, which are deceived.

Each creed points out the royal road
Which you must follow, if you gain
The perfect bliss of heav'n's abode ;
All other ways are worse than vain.

Therefore, no matter how absurd,
If one should doubt, *creed* will insist
That *he* rejects the "written word,"
And therefore is an Atheist.

One says, "for eighteen hundred years
His creed has gained increasing force,
And though beset by doubts and fears,
Through faith in Christ, it holds its course."

He claims, that length of time has blest
His church, with life's victorious might—
If lapse of years prove aught is best,
It also proves, what is, is right.

Another says, "this strange belief
Is not inspired by the Most-High ;
Giving, at most, a false relief,
It is but a triumphant lie."

Because men take, by faith alone,
The creeds as made by Priest or church,
Therein hath many errors grown,
Which could not stand reason's research.

From this same fertile source first sprung
Those fables, which long held belief;
But reason, which their knell hath rung,
Will take from God, fear, hate, and grief.

When midnight ignorance wrap'd the earth
In mythologic gloom, man's fear,
Seeking deliverance, gave birth
To demons, which rude fancies rear.

Through that vague, pantheistic light,
Which to creative source we trace,
Men caught a glimpse of Him whose might
Hath made the worlds, which fly through space.

But wisdom hath at last outgrown
The monstrous vag'ries of the past,
And ghost and goblin, each have flown
Before truth's dawning light at last.

Yet hate's dark fiend with potent power
Still haunts the "broad and flow'ry way,"
Where he finds "victims to devour,"
Who from the "straight path" often stray.

When force yoked right, to might's black car,
Then, men saw hate in God above;
But these grim fancies flew afar,
At the first dawn of "law of love."

With hate's fierce past of rayless gloom,
Must disappear each fear-formed wraith,
And side by side in error's tomb,
Shall lay all blind, misguiding faith.

Faith stays the sun and moon⁴⁸ above,
That more foul murder may be done—
To change "God's virtuous wrath" to love,
Creed⁴⁴ kills His earth-born, heav'nly Son.

If th' moon, calm, pale-faced child of night,
Staid for a moment in her path,
She stop'd in agony of fright,
At man's red-handed, awful wrath.

While Luna paused, she must have wept,
In that sweet vale of Ajalon,
Because God's love and mercy slept,
Mid scenes too foul to look upon.

Faith, which believes, by standing still,
The sun would lengthen out the day,
May also see the Father kill
A son, His mercy (?) to display.

Blind zeal finds nothing too absurd ;
Though demonizing God on high,
It would accept the "written word,"
And bless and prosper hate's great lie.

Zealots have no well-grounded thought ;
To sense and reason wholly deaf,
Their faith is what their teachers taught,
Their shibboleth is blind belief.

Amid the multitude of creeds
Which now divide the false and true,
A single one springs from man's needs—
That is (of course) espoused by you.

In forms of worship, all believe
Theirs is the only latria—
All others (they think) should receive
The true God's sure anathema.

NONE FULLY BELIEVE IN HELL.

The firmest faiths but half consent,
To hell's dark doom of endless pain ;
For, an eternal punishment
Must eternize, dark evil's reign.

If God hates wickedness and crime,
It cannot be that evil's course
Shall run on, parallel with time,
As an eternal, endless force.

Each for himself, firmly believes
That they, and theirs, will be forgiven,
For selfishly each one conceives
Himself the protege of heaven.

While each, for self, expects to gain
The benefits salvation sends,
He only dooms to endless pain,
Those whom he counts not as his friends.

But what of those who halt in doubt,
Because their reason can't approve ;
If they are hopelessly left out,
Is this a plan of "perfect love" ?

CHRISTIAN ATONEMENT.

Still, all who have a doubting mind
May justly seek some reason, why
God in His goodness (?) e'er designed ⁴⁴
That Christ should suffer, bleed, and die.

That, innocence atones for crimes,
Or virtue may endure for vice,
Might gain belief in those rude times
When sin sought help through sacrifice.

Is it Christ's death, or agony,
Which makes salvation's scheme complete?
But where in sane theology
Is found excuse for such conceit?

Were we not told, "Christ's precious blood"
Was shed by God's express desire,
We should expect another "flood,"
In which the rain would be hell-fire.

But this foul crime, which shook the earth,
And overtops all fiendish deeds,
Contained the germ of man's "new birth,"
From which have sprung salvation's creeds.

Had crimes of men so monstrous grown,
That, God would punish endlessly,
Unless through Christ, and Him alone,
He may expunge fate's stern decree?

This makes His Supreme Godship say,
"No matter how much men repent,
I will forgive in but one way—
Through death of Christ, whom I have sent."

Had *man* proposed, Jesus should die
According to salvation's plan,
Reason rejecting it would cry,
"It's too absurd for God or man."

Our prisons are o'erfull with those
Who suffer just imprisonment;
Will it excuse these human foes,
If virtue takes their punishment?

Go seek the holy, good, and great,
And torture them with agony ;
Then, this strange farce you'll imitate,
By letting murderers go free.

Seize perfect man, if such doth live,
Inflict on him unheard of pain—
And then proclaim that you forgive
All wrong, because all right is slain !

If God will not remove sin's curse,
'Til Christ is slain on Calvary's hill,
Why doth this not wholly reverse
The great command, "thou shalt not kill" ?

Now, if Christ's foes had been less base,
Or had the laws of love prevailed,
Would there been no "blood bought grace,"
And must salvation's scheme have failed ?

Or, had the Jews refused to slay
The innocent and "lowly one,"
Would God have found some other way,
To do what they had left undone ?

Must He who trod right's holy path,
And heralded the law of love,
Now prove, that hand in hand with wrath,
Sweet mercy cometh from above?

We came to curse with angry breath—
Shall we return to bless and praise,
Since only in Christ's brutal death,
God can fulfill His righteous ways?

This death, in which *faith* sees but grace,
In light of justice was a crime,
Which cursed the whole Judaic race,
And will, until the end of time.

If Calv'ry's crucifying throng,
Then, blindly did Jehovah's will,
How know we *now*, but what *seems* wrong,
May some design of God fulfill?

This whole creed springs from time's dim dawn,
When fancy peopled hill and glade,
With Pan and Furies, Fay and Faun—
Weird things which man's wild ign'rance made.

The fiendish tale, that blood alone
Was ever welcome to God's sight,
Or could in any way "atone,"
Must shock all reas'ning sense of right.

Doth it not crucify all truth,
And stultify all sense as well,
To say, a *loving* God, forsooth,
Can *hate* enough, to make a hell? ⁴⁹

Must not God's goodness be denied
And some fierce demon mount His throne,
Ere we believe He crucified ⁴⁴
The loving Son, He calls His own?

If God, beholding earth's deep woe,
Had on His Son full power conferred,
To crucify man's fiendish foe,
That scheme would have been less absurd.

But, Christ the innocent is slain,
While hell's transgressor still intent
On wickedness' eternal reign,
Is made, like God, Omnipotent.

Ah, if this heaven-dark'ning Cross
Had never stood on Calvary,
Man's sins were lighter for its loss,
If justice shapes high heaven's decree.

What *did* the Jews, who crucified
The Son of God in direst pain?
Can their fierce act be justified,
Because His loss was "our great gain?"

Was it according to God's will
That Jesus Christ should die for all ?
Did man therein God's *wish* fulfill,
As an atonement, for man's fall ?

If we say no, then we deny
The ultimatum of faith's creed ⁴⁴—
If we say yes, we justify,
The otherwise, inhuman deed.

CHRISTIAN INTOLERANCE.

When Priests, with sacerdotal robe,
Had rallied 'neath creed's gonfalon
The credulous throughout the globe,
They, led by hate, went marching on.

Soon earth was drunk with human gore,
Which mankind spilled like ruby wine ;
To music of the cannon's roar,
They danced, in ecstasy divine.

While men poured out this "wine of life,"
Which war's grim monster fiercely drank,
Amid hate's carnival and strife,
Each sun in crimson glory sank.

Strange thirst for blood-shed grew apace,
And caught a phrensy from the hour,
Which maddened all the human race,
In its wild strife for fame and power.

The world was wrap'd in sorrow's shroud,
Illumed by war's fierce flashing gleam ;
All right at foot of warrior bowed,
And justice was an idle dream.

Earth was bestrode by conq'ring chief,
Like a Colossus, in whose hand
Was held a gory crown of grief,
To deck the sorrow-stricken land.

The Rack and Block well symbolize
That progress, which blind zeal would make ;
The blood-stained Cross, on which Christ dies,
Precedes the martyr's flaming Stake.

No eloquence, of tongue or pen,
Can portray all the cruel deeds,
Which christian (?) fiends, in shape of men,
Have done in name of faith and creeds.

Behold the bloody-minded Priest,
With flaming torch, approach the stake,
Where man stands chained like helpless beast,
To die for his opinion's sake ;

See how the hissing tongues of fire
Lick up the blood, which wets the sod;
While man for right will thus expire,
This holy (?) Priest looks up to God,

Without remorse, and without shame,
Prays Him, while He in heaven doth reign,
“Oh, burn in hell’s red, quenchless flame,
This heretic, whom we have slain”!

All progress halted at the sight
Of rack, thumbscrew, and cross, aghast,
Which shine by hell’s fierce, lurid light,
On hate’s dark background of the past.

These christian crimes, of rack, and fire,
Which once in church-craft played a part,
Will no devotion now inspire,
And hell itself is a “lost art.”

At last, those christianizing things,
Which modern churches now would spurn,
Have flown away on mercy’s wings—
God grant that they shall ne’er return.

WILL GOD OR SATAN TRIUMPH?

God plants two forces side by side,
Upon time's first great battle field ;
Wrong overcomes right's humble pride,
And virtue to sin's might doth yield.

In right's first contest, we are told,
That bad was victor over good—
So runs the legend, dim and old ;
But are the facts all understood ?

The false contended with the true,
Man was God's champion in this fight ;
When, triumphing o'er right, wrong slew
And put God's vicegerent to flight.

As God, it seems, was not content
With the results which man achieved,
He therefore cursed,⁵⁰ by banishment,
Weak Adam, whom hate's fiend deceived.

The fruitfulness of earth was cursed,
And now brought forth, "thistle and thorn";⁵⁰
For man's mistake, nature reversed
Her laws, made at creation's morn.

What punishment were adequate
For this great wrong which *Satan* wrought—
What depth of woe could expiate
The endless grief, sin's power had brought.

For this o'ershad'wing, awful crime,
It should be infinite at least—
But, less than man's, it lasts through "time,"
"Above all cattle, and all beast."⁵⁰

A prudent forethought, for man's sake,
Should have suggested some restraint—
Or, had some "Angel" killed this "snake,"
Would that have ended all complaint?

Though, still, the "serpent" plies his task,
Seeking all goodness to undo,
He in high favor seems to bask
With ev'ry Eve, and Adam too.

As Eve⁵⁰ was "tempted" to sin's deed,
Creed leaves a legacy of strife
Tween Satan's issue and her "seed,"
Through which, contention still is rife.

When man was lost, on sin's dark way,
Christ's banner to time's breeze was thrown—
Which shall be victor in this fray,
Can God, through Christ, be overthrown?

Ah, wrong has overcome and slain
The Captain of salvation's host ;
But can dark evil still maintain
A contest with the Holy Ghost ?

Will God full triumph never gain—
And must the triune Godhead cower,
Confessing that it fought in vain,
Against black sin's colossal power?

When God would mold a Universe,
From nothing He constructs it all ;
When He would remedy sin's curse,
Can He not save weak men, who "fall"?

Now, if He wills, and cannot do,
Or, attempts, and trying fails,
In either case, it would be true
That wickedness o'er God prevails.

OMNIPOTENT LOVE VS. ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

If, through eternity, one soul
Must bear a never-ending pain,
Then must creation, as a whole,
Curse all, who seek God's love, in vain.

Our better judgment ever sees,
That God, in His kind Fatherhood,
Intended naught in fate's decrees,
But what conserves our highest good.

He needs no help, nor earthly aid,
And will no subterfuge employ
To carry out designs once made—
Who cannot err, need not destroy.

But, was Christ's mission e'er foretold
By ancient prophet, saint, or seer?
Men justly doubt these legends old,
From which, *Priests* say, it doth appear.⁵¹

Did Godhood enter virgin's womb,
To show, He too, was "born again"?
Did He, in death, lie in the tomb,
Then rise, to prove, He was not slain?

Are all men gods,⁵¹ who come to earth
By ghostly modes of conception?
All reason sees in such strange birth,
But "immaculate" *deception*.

"Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth,"
Was good law in Mosaic times;
What men might do in th' world's wild youth,
Would now be counted awful crimes.

When all appear in courts above,
Which law will stand, the old or new?
'Tween dark-browed hate and mild-eyed love,
Which shall be false, and which the true?

"Old things," which once were "done away"
And sleep in error's dark'ning night,
But disappeared before the ray
Of reason's brighter, dawning light.

But Christ, whose mission was of peace,
Taught a new law of loving grace,
Through which, He hoped all wrong would cease,
And thus redeem the fallen race.

Still, that most dreadful law of hate,
With more of vengeance than of love,
Doth not its dogmas all abate,
Though they were never from above.

In "good old times," Priests ruled supreme,
And ever held mankind in awe;
The thunder-crash was made to seem,
Like muttered wrath, o'er broken law.

But, "He who spoke, as ne'er man spake,"
Above all else, held truth most dear,
He taught but good, for goodness' sake,
And not through doubt, or servile fear.

But what is "fallen"? Whence the "curse"?
You say from God? That 'tis His will,
Unless through Christ He may reverse,
Or in His death, that *curse* fulfill?

DOES GOD NEED AN EXCUSE, IN PERFORMING HIS WILL?

Does an all-wise Omnipotence,
 Whose will is law, through earth and sky,
 Seek false excuse, as a pretence,
 His dearest wish to justify ?

How can the sight of blood appease
 The anger (?) of the God above !
 Will woe and death change His decrees,
 Transmuting wrath (?) to grace and love ?

If God accepts earth's greatest crime,
 As a pretext, that He may bless,
 Then, justice doth but poorly mime,
 In this strange scheme for wrong's redress.

Must Jesus Christ, as God or man,
 Endure untold, heartrending pain ?
 Could God be just, and make the plan,
 Where innocence, for wrong, is slain ?

If this, from Heaven, its sanction draws,
 Why not hold good, on earth, as well ?
 Let you, or I propose such laws,
 Would they find sanction, out of Hell ?

The Christ, and God, and Holy-Ghost,⁵⁸
 Described in sacred history,
 (Which make a single God, at most,)
 Comprise the triune mystery.

The Son, the Father crucifies,⁴⁴
As sacrifice to self alone ;
Therein the Son-God portion dies,
That, God may to Himself atone.

If this is rightly understood,
God's human (?) part hath wholly died ;
And by this death of Christ's manhood,
Salvation's scheme is justified.

If Godship left the saintly One,⁵²
When He thus suffered cruel death,
God dies no less, in *every* son,
When *man* gives up his mortal breath.

If logic is not fool, or knave,
Then how in reason's wide empire
Can God, as man, enter death's grave,
While God, as God, does not expire ?

Since, God and Holy-Ghost *survived*,
Such death was but a "play on words";
Or, if *one*-God was *triple* lived,
Man was not orphaned, by two-thirds.

FATE AND FORGIVENESS.

If God foresaw, ere man was made,
That sin would be, and man must die ;
Then, how could men this sin evade,
Which He foresaw from out the sky ?

If God doth hate, what we call wrong,
Why then consent that it should be ?
Will He permit sin to prolong
Its curse, through all eternity ?

To God, all wisdom we concede,
Though all in all, and not a part,
He doth permit, or hath decreed
These sins which men *say*, "grieved His heart."

Cause and effect must convince all,
That, love and wrath, in truth and fact,
With's Eden's tempter and man's fall,
Came, if at all, through God's own act.

If Godhood in His wisdom knows,
Some shall be damned to endless wrath,
Can *such* men e'er escape hell's woes,
And tread the "straight and narrow path" ?

And if His dimless vision sees,
The *ones* who will His pathways scorn,
Are they not damned by fate's decrees,
A million years before they're born ?

Can God then *will*, all shall be "saved,"
If He well knows, some must remain
Throughout all time, by sin enslaved,
In sight of heav'n, where mercies reign ?

Can one be damned, against God's will ?
Can all be saved, whom He forgives ?
Will grace, or wrath, His bosom fill ?
Is life a boon, to each who lives ?

Is wrath consistent with God's love ?
Could He be happy and still know,
That, while some sing His praise above,
The rest must writhe in hell below ?

Would not the sinner's piercing yell
So drown the happiness of heaven,
That, God would pardon those who fell,
And say in love, "all are forgiven" ?

If God doth *will*, and cannot save,
Is there Omnipotent power above ?
Or *can*, but *will not*, free sin's slave,
Is He then infinite, in love ?

Can finite man frustrate God's will ?
If yes, then where resides all power ?
Is Satan infinite for ill ?
If not, what is his fiendish dower ?

Will He, whose legioned hosts comprise
All elements of earth and space,
Give up the cause for which Christ dies,
And thus desert the human race ?

Or, will He even compromise
With enemy, however great,
Whose impotence He may despise,
Or with a frown annihilate ?

If God forgives, because Christ died,
Why not through love, have done the same,
And by His *will* have justified
His act of grace, which through Christ came ?

How is Christ love, if God can " hate " ?
Why make Christ die, that race to save,
'Gainst which, God's wrath was once so great,
That He swept all to one wide grave ?

We say, " God can all things achieve,"
That He can kill, then make men live ;
We also say, " men *must* believe
Or He *cannot* our sins forgive."

Such crude, dogmatic mysticism
Proves too, that God, like men, may fall ;
What better this, than atheism,
Which says there is no God at all ?

INCONSISTENCY OF TRINITY, AND
ABSURDITY OF ATONEMENT.

Are Christ and God one⁵³ and the same,
With but a single brain and heart?
Is Christ *the* God, by different name,
Each one the whole, and not a part?

If Christ, and God are truly one,
Why complicate this plan of grace
And magnify the useless Son,
Since unity, through all, we trace.

By creed's divine geometry,
Against all reason, faith explains,
How taking *one* from *two* leaves *three*,
Or *two* from *one*, and *three* remains.

Why multiply the *one* to *three*,
Since only one there is at most?
Why puzzle us with trinity,
If God, is God, and not a ghost?

Though God, in love, (?) a Son may kill,⁵⁴
We fail to see how man therein,
Escapes the sin-begotten ill,
Which creed beholds, in Adam's sin.

Man cannot be over exact
In tracing out his parentage,
If this strange, deicidal act
Makes, or unmakes, his orphanage.

The Holy-Ghost, in Mary's Son,
Begets the Christ-part of Godhead ;
Yet how unsnarl the quibbling pun,
That, though Christ dies, He is not dead.

Why mislead man by double name,
When He who came, was He who sent,
If both in all things are the same,
And never can be different ?

Why mystify salvation's task,
If He who dies, is He who lives ?
Or make Christ supplicating ask,
Since He who pleads, is He who gives ?

One, multiplied by one, at most
But equals one ; yet can one die,
And still leave God and Holy-Ghost—
One for the earth, two for the sky ?

As God is really man's friend,
Will He such devious ways pursue,
To bring about the one great end.
Which He forever has in view ?

Why lead us in a tortuous way,
To reach a fixed and given point,
Unless, to blindly lead astray,
Or, raise false hopes, to disappoint ?

Did Godhood bow its august head
In agony's dissolving throes,
Or, did some monk *say*, He was dead,
And thus deceive both friend and foes ?

This death was not a real one,
(I mean, that God can never die ;)
But, like a father being son,
Such words mean not, what they imply.

But, misguided superstition,
Which doth to bat-wing'd faith belong,
Would rather far, share hell's perdition,
Than frankly own, that it is wrong.

Such bastard offspring of *blind faith*
Is but the lineal progeny,
Of thoughtless zeal's fear-father'd wraith,
Now taught in creed's theogony.

If "all is well, that endeth well,"
The converse thought is also true,
And all was ill, through which man fell,
If we accept the Christian view.

CHRIST'S REAL MISSION.

From what we learn of Christ from birth,
He was the only guileless man,
Who trod the devious ways of earth,
Without reproach, since time began.

I do believe, that, Christ who died,
In virtue's ways so grandly trod,
That He in death was glorified,
While no one, then, believed Him God.⁵³

Great Teacher of progressive thought !
He saw from His ecstatic plane,
New truths, which lovingly He taught,
And which 'til then, men sought in vain.

His life had love's exalted aim ;
His precepts heralded the truth ;
His pure heart, free from guile or blame,
Was filled with pity's loving ruth.

With His advent sweet mercy came,
When He joined battle for the right,
His standard was love's oriflame,
Which blazed with reason's holy light.

Christ's mission was to set mind free
From Priest-craft, which had clutched all power ;
His Cross was reared by bigotry,
Whose bloody hands then ruled the hour.

He died a martyr to the rage
Of fierce intolerance of creeds,
Whose records darken hist'ry's page,
With hate's most fiendish, bloody deeds.

His only fault, and greatest crime
Was, He dared Priestly power defy ;
Christ preached reform, in that rude time—
Intol'rance answered, "Crucify" !

He was not slain, as some believe,
A sacrifice to Godhood's will ;
Such cruel death, all must conceive,
Would but the laws of hate fulfill.

Like all great pioneers of thought,
He paid that price to bigot's rage,
With which all progress has been bought,
By those who saw beyond their age.

His walk was reason's firmest tread ;
His teachings heralded truth's dawn ;
But scheming Church-men crowned His head
With Godship,⁵⁴ from mere fancy drawn.

No grander life has blessed the race !
To Him all virtues we accord—
Ill recompense for loving grace,
He met a martyr's great reward.

BIGOTRY.

Although the truth may harshly grate
Upon the bigot's slavish ear,
Still must the stern decrees of fate,
In love's grand triumph over hate,
March ever onward, without fear.

But he, who courts the world's loud praise,
Must, like a coward, shun the light,
Which doth illume bright reason's ways,
And tread creed's labyrinthine maze,
Or fall beneath hate's with'ring blight.

Along time's dim, dark centuries,
Resounds the hateful tread of wrong,
And up to God go wailing cries,
While echo answers from the skies,
“ All right is weak, but vice is strong.”

Ah, when in this, or any age
Went forth the soul clad in the right,
And hath escaped the ign'rant rage
With which the christian bigots wage,
Fierce creed's exterminating fight.

And even Christ, though free from blame,
Who walked in sorrow, crowned with grief,
Seeking not power, wealth, or fame,
But, teaching mercy, in right's name,
Gave a grand life, for His belief.

No joy, for Him, would life afford,
This side of death's kind, silent grave ;
For, seeking peace, He found a sword,
While each man worshiping, adored
And kissed it, like a coward slave.

All men bowed down and worship'd Cain,
In guise of war's red-handed chief ;
While blood ran red, like falling rain,
Men courted death and laughed at pain,
In scorn of weak, unmanly grief.

Still, grandest truths, rarest and best,
Were born amid wrong's sick'ning strife,
And nursed upon the loving breast
Of liberty, which aye has blest
The right, when wrong hath sought its life.

Christ met His fate without a sigh,
And bled for those He sought to save ;
While with firm tread, and glancing eye
He faced His foe, nor feared to die—
Seeing no terror, in the grave.

Soon, o'er the dead Christ's vacant tomb,
The sword in fiery circles swept,
'Til carnage dread and awful gloom
Seemed to portend the final doom,
To those who fought, where He had slept.

From then, 'til now, a gulf we cross
Of almost nineteen hundred years ;
But, what sad years of gilded dross,
And to true progress what a loss—
Ah, what an ocean of grief's tears !

Then, all the gods, when Christ was dead,
Left sin's dark world, to Cain and hate ;
The angels too, since Jesus bled,
Fearing His fate, in terror fled
From earth, through heaven's pearly gate.

Herods of hate still seek to slay
The noblest offspring of free thought ;
And coward creed condemns alway
Each one, who dares to preach or pray,
• By that grand light, which truth has taught.

Men have been martyred, through all time,
And still must be, while creed owns slaves ;
Although grand heroes die sublime,
Should those who slew them for no crime,
Write, “infidel,”⁵⁵ above their graves ?

Dark superstition, though perverse,
Will yet *repent*, as well as *pray*.
When reason shall these wrongs reverse,
Remorse will then expunge hate's curse,
And christian crimes must pass away.

Since God is truly, kindly leal,
Will not all bigotry surcease ?
And must not creed's mad, blinding zeal,
Deferring to the common weal,
Forego at last its strange caprice ?

Shall superstition's dismal shade
Never incur avenging wrath ?
Or shall true reason's shining blade
Be drawn in progress' grand crusade,
And sweep all error from truth's path ?

THE SOUL.

The human mind is but a sign,
Or symbol of the deathless soul,
Which is a spark of that divine
Essence, of which, God is the whole.

On wings of thought the mind can fly
From star to star, with speed God-given ;
It roams at will through earth and sky,
Or scales the heights of highest heaven.

But, while its prison-house remains,
Though it may often reach the stars,
It still is bound by earth-wrought chains;
Within life's puny, prison bars.

Our present most imperial thought,
Which from immortal essence springs,
Shall be with rarer grandeur fraught,
When death shall plume our unfledged wings.

From earth set free, the new-born soul
Will for a broader freedom yearn—
Forgetful of earth's paltry dole,
'Twill haste to God, and ne'er return.

Still, that grand power whose shining sheen
Lights up all paths where it may tend,
Forever walks by it, unseen,
To guide to being's chosen end.

And thus, each soul which came through birth,
From being's boundless, outer night,
But perches on the flying earth,
To plume its wings for onward flight.

Like bird of passage, it may rest,
Although it came not here to stay ;
It lights upon life's shining crest,
Then hastens on its untrod way.

Each wand'ring waif, low hovering,
Late from the Infinite, now flown,
But stoops to earth on tired wing,
In its soul-flight to'ard the unknown.

How it goes hence no one can trace,
It leaves no trail, to mark its track ;
We follow it to verge of space,
And mourn, because it comes not back,

And yet, this spirit is not lost,
But on some grander errand bent,
It has death's Stygian river crost,
To do the will of Him who sent.

It matters not what course it steers,
Nor what new paths are yet untrod ;
Each soul shall round the cycling years,
Which must begin, and end, with God.³⁰

NOTES.

¹ PAGE 7. *I bow before one God.*

² Sam. vii. 22. 1 Chron. viii. 4; xvii. 20. Psalms lxxxvi. 10.
Isa. xliii. 3, 10, 11; xliv. 6, 8; xlv. 5, 6, 18, 21, 22; xlvi. 9.

² P. 12. *If God be for us, who can be against us.*

Rom. viii. 31.

³ P. 12. *God repents and grieves.*

Gen. vi. 6.

⁴ P. 14. *Nothing is impossible with God.*

Dan. iv. 35. Luke i. 37.

⁵ P. 17. *Christ tempted.*

Matt. iv. 1 to 18.

⁶ P. 17. *God's anger(?)*.

Deut. ix. 9, 13, 17, 19, 20. Num. xii. 9. 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. 2 Chron. xxviii. 9. Psalms vii. 11; xxi. 19.

⁷ P. 17. *God's hate(?)*.

Prov. vi. 16.

⁸ P. 22. *God's foreknowledge*.

Isa. xlvi. 9; xlvi. 3, 5. Matt. vi. 8. Luke xii. 30. John ii. 24, 25; vi. 64.

⁹ P. 24. *Eat not from knowledge's fated tree.*

Gen. ii. 17. Why give man a taste and capacity for knowledge, then forbid its acquisition?

¹⁰ P. 24. *Their eyes were opened and they knew they were naked.*

Gen. iii. 7. They covered their nakedness with fig-leaves, the first step toward civilization.

^{11.12.13} P. 24. *Now, lest man should put forth his hand, etc.*

Man is punished for gaining knowledge, and fearing, in his wisdom he may become *immortal* God turns him out of the *garden*; and as if to prevent his *immortality*, all access to the “tree of life” is made impossible, by the “flaming sword and Cherubim.” This would indicate that God intended that man should *not* be immortal.

¹⁴ P. 34. *They, in God's name, did damning crimes.*

Ex. xi. 2, 3; *id.* xii. 7, 13, 21, 22, 23, 35, 36. Num. xxxi. 1 to 19. Deut. xiii. 9, 10, 15; *id.* xx. 13 to 17; *id.* xxi. 11 to 21. Josh. vi. 21; *id.* viii. 25, 26; *id.* xi. 11. 2 Kings xv. 16. Out of respect to the reader I refrain from referring to passages in the Bible, which give a history of the beastly licentiousness and utter depravity of those Priests and Prophets, Judges and Kings, whom the Bible says were the especial favorites of Jehovah.

¹⁵ P. 34. *The deeds imputed to God, were the fiendish butcheries, and shocking crimes done by Moses, Joshua, etc., etc.*

See Note 14.

¹⁶ P. 37. *The world made in six days.*

Gen. ii. 2. John i. 3.

6*

¹⁷ P. 37. *Working by days work, like a man.*

Gen. i. 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31.

¹⁸ P. 37. *God rested on the seventh day.*

Gen. ii. 2.

¹⁹ P. 39. *But, Bible, dogma, etc., which teach God's fallibility.*

The Bible makes God tell Adam an untruth, Gen. ii. 17. But the Devil tells the truth, Gen. iii. 5, 6. God repents, Gen. vi. 6. Ex. xi. 2, 3. Advises, aids, and abets fraud and deceit, Num. xii. 9. Anger, Deut. ix. 19, 20. Num. xxxii. 10; *id.* 11, changes His mind. Incites Moses to murder and robbery, Deut. vii. 2, 3; *id.* to retaliation, 10; *id.* counsels vengeance without pity, 16; *id.* tells what to do if you see a beautiful woman, whom you, etc., etc., xxi. 11 to 15. Robbery, etc., Josh. vi. 19. Ridiculous covenant with Abraham, Gen. xvii. 10. Hardened hearts, etc., Josh. xi. 20.

²⁰ P. 40. *Received from Godhood face to face.*

Deut. v. 4. Gen. xxxii. 30.

²¹ P. 40. *"The Lord said to Moses," etc.*

Ex. vii. 1; same at beginning of each chapter of Exodus to xii. Deut. ix. 13, 14, 17, 18, and many other places.

²²P. 40. *Murder.*

Num. xxxi. 1, 2, 7, 8, 17. Deut. xxi. 21. Josh. vi. 21; *id.* viii. 25; *id.* x. 11, 40. Judges i. 4; *id.* xii. 6. The Old Testament is full of murder, fornication, and adultery committed by those who claimed to be guided by God's express commands. See Note 14.

²³P. 40. *Rape.*

Num. xxxi. 18, 35. 32,000 virgins turned over at one time to the soldiers, Priests, etc., for their use, after their fathers, mothers, and brothers had been butchered.

²⁴P. 40. *Dreams.*

Gen. xxxi. 10, 11; *id.* xxxvii. 5, 9. Num. xii. 4, 6. Judges vii. 13. 1 Kings iii. 5. Matt. i. 20; *id.* ii. 13, 19; *id.* xxvii. 19. The Israelites were famous dreamers.

²⁵P. 40.

Moses governed the ignorant and superstitious Israelites, by making them believe that he had an intimate, personal acquaintance with Deity. He very often practised the *pious fraud*, of pretending that he was going up some hill or mountain to talk with God. Ex. xix. 3; xxxii. 15, 19. Num. xx. 28. Moses governed and controlled his followers, very much the same, as some less ignorant *believers* are governed at the present day.

²⁶ P. 41. *The Israelites were slaves to the Egyptians.*

Ex. vi. 9, etc.

²⁷ P. 52. *He did not know that he was nude.*

Gen. iii. 7.

²⁸ P. 53. *Instead of knowledge bringing death.*

If *eating* of the fruit of the tree of *knowledge* (Gen. iii. 6) made Adam and Eve wiser (Gen. iii. 7), instead of a curse, it was a blessing, and instead of a *fall*, it was an elevation in the right direction. But the idea of keeping the people in ignorance, was once a favorite theory of the *Church*, and some Churches have not entirely outgrown that wicked notion.

²⁹ P. 61. *He still pronounced, that all was good.*

Gen. i. 31.

³⁰ P. 63. *The soul goes back to God who gave.*

Eccl. xii. 7.

³¹ P. 63. *Sacrifice and shedding blood.*

The first sacrifice caused the first murder, Gen. iv. 2 to 28. Sacrifice as an atonement, Lev. i. 4. The Jewish sacrificial ceremony was barbarous and nonsensical, Ex. xiii. 15. See directions for ceremony, Ex. xxix., Lev. chaps. i. to viii., and Num. xv.

³² P. 64. *Sodom and Gomorrah.*

Gen. xix. 24.

³³ P. 64. *The Deluge.*

Gen. vii. 11. The most learned scientists of the present day are unanimous in denying that any such event ever happened.

^{34,35} P. 65. *He saved the seed, etc.*

Gen. ix. 1. Noah, Japheth, Ham, and Shem. Gen. vi. 10, 18. If God's idea, in bringing the flood, was to get rid of the sin, which grieved His heart; the sequel paid His judgment a very poor compliment. For Noah, like most other navigators, was given to drink, and soon after making land he "was drunken" (Gen. ix. 21), and his posterity were so God-defying that they attempted to build a tower, "whose top may reach unto heaven"; but God fearing (as we may infer Gen. xi. 3 to 9) that they might succeed, confounded their language and scattered them abroad, etc.

³⁶ P. 65.

See Notes 34 and 35. Babel. Gen. xi. 4.

³⁷ P. 66. *Plagues of locusts, frogs, and lice.*

Ex. vii., viii., ix., x. It seems strange that the sorcerers and magicians of the idolatrous Pharaoh could do *any* of the *tricks*, or perform any of the miracles which Moses and Aaron performed in Egypt. See Ex. vii. 11, 12, 22; *id.* viii. 7.

³⁸ P. 69. *God cannot err, nor fail, nor change.*

Isa. xliv. 6; *id.* xlviii. 12. Mal. iii. 6. I am the Lord, I change not.

³⁹ P. 69. *There also springs dark evil's force.*

Isa. xlv. 7. I make peace, and create evil.

⁴⁰ P. 70. *Creed makes Him harden hearts, etc.*

Ex. vii. 13, 22; *id.* viii. 15, 19; *id.* ix. 12; *id.* x. 20, 27.

⁴¹ P. 70. *Attributes less than Supreme.*

See Note 19. See also, Ezek. xiv. 9. 1 Kings xxii. 23. Thess. ii. 11. If *one* prophet tells a *lie*, or if God puts lies into any prophet's mouth, how know we which (if any) to believe?

⁴²P. 72. Can Priests forgive sins?

Num. xv. 27, 28. Matt. xvi. 19. John xx. 23. In the doctrines herein taught we see the finger-marks of the cunning Jesuit, who was the custodian of the (misnamed) sacred (?) writings for centuries; and who forged or fashioned the doctrines taught, in such a way as to best promote the temporal power of the Church of Rome.

⁴³P. 73. Since God, in love, can shape our fate.

Dan. iii. 17. Isa. xlv. 13; *id.* xlviii. 17; *id.* lv. 11; *id.* lix. 1. Luke i. 37. Cor. ix. 8. Dan. iv. 35. 2 Tim. i. 9. Matt. xxiv. 31. If God is almighty, He *can* and *will* shape our future as best to suit His design.

⁴⁴P. 74. He died in vain, or saved the race.

If Christ was crucified by the will of God (John xix. 11. Acts ii. 23) then the crucifixion was the act of God. But we fail to discover, how God, by so inhumanly murdering Christ, could make that wicked act a pretext for forgiving the sins of men. The utter absurdity of the theory stamps it as false and fabulous.

⁴⁵P. 74. Prayer.

Matt. vi. 8.

⁴⁶P. 75. And his belief "hath made him whole."

Matt. ix. 22.

⁴⁷ P. 76. *But wisely prayed, "Thy will be done."*

Matt. xxvi. 39, 42.

⁴⁸ P. 80. *Faith stays the sun and moon above.*

Josh. x. 12, 13. Every school-boy knows, that if the sun and moon *did* stand still at the command of Joshua, the day would not be prolonged thereby. If the earth had ceased to revolve, that would have lengthened the day. Joshua, though a good fighter, was a bad philosopher. That theory is akin to that of seeing the whole world from the top of "an *exceedingly high* mountain." Matt. iv. 8.

⁴⁹ P. 86. *Can hate enough, to make a hell. All things were made by God.*

Gen. i. John i. 1, 2, 3. God creates evil. Isa. xlv. 7.

⁵⁰ Pp. 90 and 91.

Gen. iii. 14, the Devil's punishment. Verse 16, Eve's punishment. Verse 17, Adam's punishment. Verse 18, thorns and thistles. Verse 19, Adam must earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. These pretended punishments, and changes in the laws of nature, indicate a reversal of the Divine purpose and plans. Why distinguish between punishment of man and woman? And why punish men so severely, while Satan is let off so easily?

⁵¹ P. 93. *Was Christ's mission e'er foretold?*

There is no prophecy in the Bible, which points directly, or indirectly, to the Christ of the four Gospels. See Note 54. The pretended prophecy (Isa. vii. 14) is almost literally quoted (Matt. i. 23), and an attempt is made to connect the prophecy (?) of Isaiah with the Saviour. Isaiah's prophecy, as far as the *child* is concerned, was fulfilled 742 years before the birth of Jesus. Isa. viii. 1, 2, 3. "And I (the prophet) went unto the prophetess (the prophet's wife) and she conceived and bare a son." Verse 18, "Behold I, and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders," etc., evidently referring, among others, to the child which was born to him by the *prophetess*. Isaiah subsequently says (xliii. 3), For I am the Lord thy God . . . thy Saviour, and verse 11, "I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no Saviour." If Isaiah intended to foretell a Saviour, other than God, in the first instance, he most emphatically denies Him afterward. These prophets are not very reliable. 1 Sam. xviii. 10; id. xix. 9. 1 Kings xxii. 21, 22, 23. Ezek. xiv. 9.

⁵² P. 96. *If Godship left the saintly one.*

Did Christ intend to be understood as relinquishing His claim to Messiahship in His strange utterance on the Cross? Matt. xxvii. 46.

⁵³ Pp. 95 and 100. *The Christ and God and Holy Ghost.*

The doctrine of the Trinity, though too absurd for argument, has been a subject of bitter controversy between the Unitarians and Trinitarians for many years in the past, and probably will continue to be for some time to come.

⁵⁵ P. 103. ⁵⁴ P. 104. *"But scheming Church-men crowned His head With Godship, from mere fancy drawn." No one, then, believed Him God.*

Isa. xliii. 3, 10, 11. Matt. xiii. 55. Mark vi. 3; id. xviii. 32.

Luke ii. 48; *id.* iii. 23; *id.* iv. 22; *id.* xviii. 19. John i. 45; *id.* iv. 42; *id.* v. 19; *id.* xiv. 28. Acts ii. 22. Heb. ii. 7, 9; *id.* iii. 3.

The long looked for Messiah of the Jews was to be of the line, and sit upon the *earthly* throne of David. This expectation was not fulfilled in the person of Jesus. The Jewish idea of the Messiahship was founded upon the theory of Christ's Davidical descent. Matthew (chap. i.) and Luke (chap. iii. 23 to 38) each attempt to give a genealogy of the Saviour, as evidence of such lineal descent from David. Matthew traces the line from David down to Joseph; while Luke, reversing the order, beginning with Joseph, follows his lineage back to David, and continues it back, through Adam, to God.

But this evidence, flimsy and contradictory as it is, is wholly destroyed and the genealogical descent is flatly set at naught and contradicted by the persons, who first falsely pretended that it was true. For Matthew (i. 18) and Luke (i. 35) squarely state that Christ was not begotten by Joseph, but by the Holy Ghost. Therefore it was worse than a waste of time to trace a pretended genealogy, and then prove the *pretence was* utterly false.

But, quite as unfortunate for the credibility of this mythological tale is the fact, that Matthew (i. 17) makes twenty-eight generations from David to Christ; while Luke makes forty-three generations from Christ to David; a discrepancy which proves beyond all question that *one* of these writers has most egregiously blundered. Whoever will take the trouble to compare the names given in these two contradictory records, will find that these *inspired* narrators give only two names in common, viz., Joseph and David. This stamps the whole as an idle tale, and proves beyond question that one, or both were romancing, or making a bungling attempt at humbug. The genealogy, *if true*, was of no value whatever, unless Joseph was the natural and *real* father of Jesus.

Blind indeed must be the *faith* that can reconcile these contradictions and accept them as the inspired word of God. The whole theory of Christ's Divinity, resting, as it does, upon the dream of Joseph, and the simple *word* of witnesses, who each convict the other of *falsifying*, does not amount to evidence sufficient to justify belief.

The whole history of Christ, from birth to ascension, as narrated in the four Gospels, is so confused and contradictory that I am irresistibly driven to the conclusion, that it is in the main a collection of idle and romantic tales, invented by the persons who instituted the ancient Roman Catholic Church. The strange disagreement of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John as to the principal facts related proves beyond dispute, that the whole *cannot* be true.

Inspiration does not admit of errors or contradictions, and when one or both of these appear, the pretence of inspired infallibility falls to the ground, and these writings, like all others of human invention, are open to the same searching inquiry and criticism, which all important documents receive.

And it must not be forgotten that the Romish Church, which was the depository and custodian of the records from which the Bible was made, do not pretend to show us any *original* documents. They have no copies older than about 500 years after Christ. It is not a violent supposition that the same Church, Pope, and Bishops which had no scruples about employing the rack, thumbscrew, fagot, and stake, and all of the other infernal machinery of the damnable Inquisition, to force upon man the "true faith," would hesitate to alter, add to, or abridge any document, or even forge new ones for the purpose of carrying out their designs. Probably all *original* documents were destroyed, because their preservation would convict the *infallible* (?) Church of the grave crimes of forgery and fraud.

Men blindly subscribe to articles of faith and church tenets, which reason condemns as false, and then hire a minister of the Gospel to convince them that such creeds are true. Ministers rarely, if ever, point out errors or contradictions in the pretended word of God, not because they do not know them to exist, but because the penalty for that kind of independent honesty would cause the Reverend to lose his place; and he might be driven to the disagreeable alternative of gaining his bread by the sweat of his brow. A false and pernicious custom of society compels Ministers to preach and teach only what is in accordance with the professed creed, without regard to truth or reason. And when-

ever a divine, who is cursed with a progressive mind, no matter how ample his reason, nor how holy his intent, steps one side from the error-beaten path, he is ruthlessly condemned as heretical, and unmercifully set aside. A high premium is paid to blind devotion, while curses and contempt are the rewards of all honest, and progressive thought.

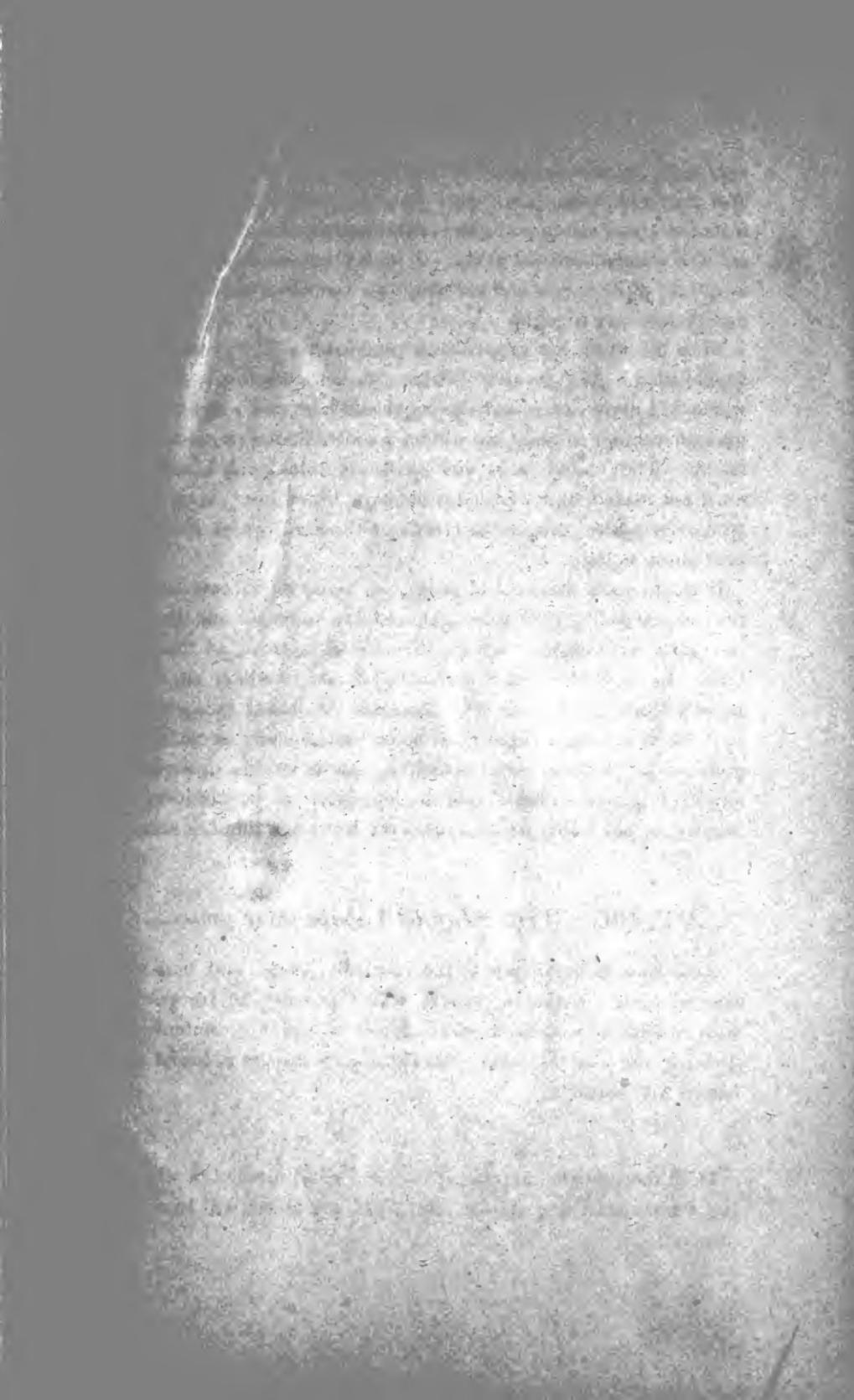
Thus the world has groped, and plodded on in ignorance and superstition. No greater offence can be committed, nor one which will more deeply stir the anger and hate of a blind believer, than an attempt to point out to him a contradiction or error in his creed. The church says you shall not think, creed says you must not reason, and a false custom says, brand him as an *infidel* who even *doubts* in regard to creeds or theories, which all reason condemns as false.

It would seem natural and proper, to invite the closest scrutiny, the deepest and grandest thought, and the most minute research in regard to matters of such grave and vital moment, as man's relations to his Maker and that shadowy future to which all are so rapidly tending. But, he who possesses the manly independence to think or reason for himself, is ostracized, socially, morally, and politically. But, the world is making grand strides upward and onward in genuine liberty, and the foul grasp of superstition and bigotry, is fast losing its hold upon the heart and mind of man.

⁵⁵ P. 107. *Write "Infidel" above their graves.*

Reference is here made to the cowardly, cruel, and barbarous custom of the christian church, which pursues all freethinkers with relentless vengeance while they live, and not content with gloating over their eternal damnation, endeavors to brand their names with infamy.

If, in the thoughts herein presented, I shall succeed in stimulating a more searching inquiry after *truth*, my object will have been attained.











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